A Sensemaking Approach to Culture and Opportunity Development: A Study of Vietnamese Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the UK

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I, VietDung Pham, declare that this thesis entitled, *A Sensemaking Approach to Culture and Opportunity Development: A Study of Vietnamese Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the UK* and the work presented in it, is my own; and that:

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- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
- I have acknowledged all the main sources of help.
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

VIETDUNG PHAM

March 2020

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends, colleagues and the future generations of Vietnamese people around the world who are, or will be, concerned about the harm done to the culture of Vietnam under the rule of an authoritarian government and its impact on the level of civilisation, national security, sense of national identity, economic and technological development, independence, freedom (movement and expression), happiness, and equality between people. May peace and true unity be upon the Vietnamese people around the world within the next few generations.

ABSTRACT

Recent entrepreneurship research has suggested that opportunity development takes place as entrepreneurs move through the stages of intention formation, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation. One major issue with this staged approach is that it is unclear how individuals make sense of such an entrepreneurial opportunity. Using a sensemaking approach (variation-selection-retention or VSR), this thesis develops a theoretical framework aiming to understand the cognitive processing of the transition between entrepreneurial opportunity and entrepreneurial action. Here, entrepreneurial opportunity is further developed once an entrepreneurial action has been realised. The theoretical framework is subsequently employed to analyse the role of home-country culture on decision-making leading to action, which ultimately develops opportunity. Using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), this study provides a detailed examination of the lived experience of nine (9) Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK. IPA is suitable for answering the research question: How do Vietnamese entrepreneurs develop opportunity through their cultural lens during immigrant entrepreneurship? Four cultural values of Vietnamese neo-Confucianism are identified in the literature review: fragmented, uncritical, suspicion-oriented, and stability-seeking (or FUSS). The findings propose that each cultural value dominantly affects a particular VSR stage driving entrepreneurial action. This research contributes to the literature and practice by (1) confirming action as resembling opportunity development regardless of the stage of the entrepreneurial process (Dimov, 2007), (2) promoting the link between culture and entrepreneurship viewed under the cognition-behaviour perspective (Kerr & Coviello, 2020), and (3) supporting a shift in entrepreneurship research to the context of less accessible and less visible ethnic minority groups such as the Vietnamese community in London (Bagwell, 2018).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUD	Australian Dollar
DRV	Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam
EA	Entrepreneurial Action
EE	Entrepreneurship education
EEM	Entrepreneurial event model
EI	Entrepreneurial intention
EII	Entrepreneurial implementation intention
FUSS	Fragmented, uncertainty-avoiding, stability-seeking, suspicion-oriented
GLOBE	Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness
ICP	Indochinese Communist Party
IJEBR	International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research
IPA	Interpretive phenomenological analysis
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
OR	Opportunity Recognition
OE	Opportunity Evaluation
OI	Opportunity Implementation
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control as a component of Ajzen's (1991) TPB
PEST	Political-Economic-Social-Technological analysis
SCB	Sensemaking and confirmatory bias
SD	Psychic distance
SSC	Socially situated cognition
RSV	Republic of South Vietnam
TPB	Theory of planned behaviour
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	The United States of America
VCP	Vietnam Communist Party
VSR	Variation, selection and retention

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Culture: an organised set of beliefs, codes, myths, stereotypes, values, norms, frames and so forth that are shared in the collective memory of a group or society (Zald, 1996)

Entrepreneurship: the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources one currently controls (Stevenson, 1983, 1985; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1991)

Entrepreneurial opportunity: a set of favourable circumstances (Barringer, 2012)

Sensemaking approach: the use of the triad of variation, selection, and retention in research as a powerful paradigm that helps to explain the emergence, development, retainment, and replacement of entrepreneurial opportunities (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003)

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): a recently developed qualitative approach to psychology aiming to grasp the texture and qualities of an experience as it is lived by an experiencing subject and, at the same time, document the researcher's sense-making (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a review of the literature in entrepreneurship and culture will be provided. It first introduces research into entrepreneurship that has occurred over the last few decades (e.g., personality traits) and the four entrepreneurial stages: intention formation, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation. The chapter then highlights the importance of seeing entrepreneurship as a process that revolves around opportunity development initiated as the entrepreneur taking action.

The research gap is identified as the lack of an understanding of how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunities across the four entrepreneurial stages. This section is followed by a brief overview of the methodology to be taken in this research and the research context of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London. The chapter ends with a section presenting the research question, research aim, and research objectives.

1.1. Background of the Study and Research Gap

1.1.1 Overview of entrepreneurship research

Landström and Persson (2010) noted that the entrepreneurship discipline has flourished as a research field over the last three decades, gaining a prominent position in journals focusing on business and management. For example, Wiklund et al. (2011) suggested that entrepreneurship has become one of the larger groups of the Academy of Management Journal. The field has recently attracted more attention from policymakers, businesses, and universities through the commercialisation of science and technological knowledge. This broad application of entrepreneurship research has helped improve the

lives and well-being of millions of people and many civil societies around the world, especially in the Global South (Storey & Tether, 1998; McElwee & Atherton, 2005).

Generally, entrepreneurship literature embraces numerous dimensions that are examined at various levels, i.e., individual, team, venture, corporate, and macroeconomic levels through the use of multiple research traditions and methods (Carlsson et al., 2013). The heart of its research, however, lies within the study of the entrepreneurial process, entrepreneurial opportunity, and the interaction between various organisational entities (Acs & Audretsch, 2003). Therefore, it is unsurprising that much of the literature focuses on sources of individuals who act on opportunities demonstrated through the analysis of opportunity recognition, evaluation, and implementation (Gartner, 1988; Shane, 2003).

1.1.2 Early research: personality traits and entrepreneurship

Historically, there has been a myriad of research papers detailing personality traits that make someone an entrepreneur (Audretsch, 2012). These studies focus on the characteristics that increase the likelihood of an individual engaging in entrepreneurial activities or behaviours. Personality traits can include abilities (general, numerical, verbal, spatial, or emotional intelligence), motives (need for achievement, power, or affiliation), attitudes as well as the overarching style of a person's experiences and actions (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, which are collectively referred to as the Big Five or OCEAN in the literature). Individuals who act upon opportunities were previously demonstrated to often possess,

for example, a high need for achievement (Hansemark, 2003; McClelland, 1961), a stable level of internal locus of control (Begley & Boyd, 1987), a strong willingness to bear risk (Luchsinger & Bagby, 1987), a tendency to accept tolerance for ambiguity (Brockhaus & Horwitz, 1986), and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Chen et al., 1998). Several meta-analytic papers have shown the validity of adopting personality traits to explain entrepreneurial behaviour in general as well as the relationship between the big five personalities and entrepreneurship in particular (Akhtara et al., 2016; Antoncic et al., 2015; Bleidorn et al., 2010; Brandstätter, 2011; Chan et al., 2015). Specifically, Antoncic et al. (2015) suggest that the big five personality factors can be significant predictors of real-life entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions. However, the construct of entrepreneurial intention in this research is not explicitly defined. Instead, the authors focused on the aspects of asking participants about the possibility of 'founding' a company. In fact, literature on entrepreneurship has developed an inventory for measuring entrepreneurial intention (i.e., Liñán & Chen, 2009), which has not been employed in this research. In more recent research by Akhtara et al. (2015), the authors investigated the effects of personality traits and social capital on entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial activity, focusing on understanding how ‘intrapreneurial’ activity can be fostered amongst an organisation's workforce. The research identifies that entrepreneurial activity is unrelated to broad personality traits, while contextualised measures of ‘openness to experience’ and conscientiousness predict work-related innovation. These results highlight the importance of personality traits and social capital as determinants of work-related innovation and pave the way for further research into the role of personality traits and entrepreneurial activities.

Interestingly, a longitudinal study in a related field by Bleidorn et al. (2010) assessing the existing assumptions stated in the five-factor theory about traits and goals was conducted on a sample of 217 identical and 112 fraternal twin pairs. This study suggests the existence of reciprocal genetic and environmental effects between traits and life goals. Here, goals can include entrepreneurial goals which refer to the intent to start a business. Besides, meta-analysis results of entrepreneurship research on personality between 1990 and 2010 by Brandstätter (2011) in consultation with other meta-analysis papers identified several categories including risk propensity of entrepreneurs and managers (Stewart & Roth, 2001), entrepreneurs' vs managers' Big Five (Zhao & Seibert, 2006), specific personality traits predicting business creation and success (Rauch & Frese, 2007), entrepreneurial intention and performance – Big Five (Zhao et al., 2010), and achievement motivation of entrepreneurs (Stewart & Roth, 2007).

Research in entrepreneurship also offers a contrasting view on personality traits and other individual constructs in explaining entrepreneurial behaviour. For example, the relationship between demographic characteristics and entrepreneurship (Mainela et al., 2014) and even between various personal traits themselves has been found to be challenging to capture. Also, when it comes to how these factors inform the entrepreneur's perceived opportunity, a study conducted by Palich and Bagby (1995) demonstrated that entrepreneurs who categorise themselves as not being likely to take risks show their predisposed tendency to view several situations as opportunistic (e.g., risky ventures with low return), as opposed to non-entrepreneurs. This conflict in

entrepreneurship research on personality traits urges research to enquire further into the mind of the entrepreneurs (or entrepreneurial cognition), specifically as to how opportunities are perceived by entrepreneurs. As such, a shift away from this initial focus has recently been made from studying factors that increase an individual's likelihood of engaging with opportunities towards understanding the nature of the entrepreneurial opportunities. Here, the construct of opportunity is broadly considered as 'a set of favourable circumstances' that allow entrepreneurial activities to happen (Ardichvili and Cardozo, 2000; McCarthy et al., 2019). This move is an essential step urging scholars to contribute to the increased clarity of research in the field by placing a theoretical distinction upon the nature of individuals who run business ventures (i.e., studies relating to personality traits), the entrepreneurial opportunities (what the entrepreneurs perceive), and the context within which these individuals pursue opportunities (Alvarez, 2005). Within this younger stream of research, scholars can focus on 'the nexus of enterprising individuals and valuable opportunities' (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003, p.333) while studying the 'pursuit of opportunities' (Stevenson, 1983, 1985; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1991).

Although the 'set of favourable circumstances' informing opportunity is not well explained in the literature, these studies that focus on the ability to pursue opportunity 'beyond the resources one currently controls' and to navigate the uncertainty during this process (Stevenson, 1983, 1985; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1991) allow researchers to consider the pivotal importance of the opportunities. Here, the opportunity phenomenon has been identified to be discovered through alertness or by surprise (or opportunity discovery) as well as via a deliberate effort to disrupt a market (or opportunity creation) (Davidsson,

2015; Short et al., 2010). Fundamentally, Shane and Ventakaraman (2000) believed that opportunities must not be understood as a singular phenomenon, but instead idiosyncratic to the entrepreneurial actor. Thus, through the study of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation, research in the field lays a better foundation for future entrepreneurship enquiry to understand this 'set of favourable circumstances' that ultimately nurtures the entrepreneurial process (Busenitz et al., 2003).

1.1.3 The staged approach to the entrepreneurial process and opportunity research

A typical model proposed by Shane (2003) suggested that an entrepreneur transitions through three stages of the entrepreneurial process, namely opportunity recognition, evaluation, and implementation. Some intrinsic and extrinsic factors within this process that potentially increase the alertness of entrepreneurs (Kirzner, 1989, 1999) during opportunity recognition have been explored, e.g., information asymmetry (Hayek, 1945), search (Herron & Sapienza, 1992), experiential learning (Corbett, 2005; Kolb, 1984), prior entrepreneurial knowledge (Haynie et al., 2009; Shane, 2000; Shepherd & DeTienne, 2005), and social networks (Hills et al., 1997). In these studies, the focus was on the cognition of the entrepreneur with little emphasis on studying their behaviour. A typical example is the line of research that addresses cognitive processes, such as expert scripts based on an empirical exploration of the mindset supporting new transaction commitment (among NAFTA business people; Mitchell et al., 2000). Other relevant research focusing on opportunity evaluation and opportunity exploitation include counterfactual thinking and

mental simulations in identifying, shaping and then pursuing innovative opportunities (Gaglio, 2004), cognitive short-cuts and heuristics under boundaries, exchange of cognitive psychology, entrepreneurial cognition and metacognition (Haynie et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2004), self-regulation processes (Bryant, 2007), negative and positive framing influencing effortful information processing and heuristics (Kuvaas & Selart, 2004), and cognitive pattern recognition helping entrepreneurs to 'connect the dots' between historical events and experiences that influence opportunity recognition and evaluation (Baron, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001). However, Dimov (2007a) suggested that actions that are taken by prospective entrepreneurs after having established an idea are fundamentally essential. Here, the action is referred to as entrepreneurial enactment that eventually shapes entrepreneurial opportunity; and thus, 'without action, there is no insight' (Gartner et al., 2003, p.144).

More recently, attention has been diverted towards the decision-making leading to action along the stages of the entrepreneurial process (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Alvarez & Barney, 2010; Kirzner, 1989; Shane, 2000; Venkataraman, 2003). Again, several theories in psychology have been borrowed to explain the behaviour in this management speciality area of entrepreneurship. For example, psychology-related approaches that have been utilised include cognitive psychology (Mitchell et al., 2008; Sánchez et al., 2011; Ucbasaran et al., 2009), research on affect or emotion (Baron, 2008), opportunity coherence theory (Shepherd et al., 2007), regulatory focus theory (Hmieleski & Baron, 2008), agency and information processing theory (Jones & Butler, 1992; Workman et al., 2009), social cognitive theory (De Carolis & Saparito, 2006), and structuration theory

(Chiasson & Saunders, 2005). These studies recognised that '*emotions, failures, and mindsets*' (Mitchell et al., 2008) are based on the entrepreneur's ability to process information in the form of novice/expert scripts and turn them into a competitive advantage. Interestingly, scholars call for further studies to explore the structures of expert knowledge together with entrepreneurial action that sustains this knowledge (e.g., action-based steps of expert entrepreneurs; Mitchell et al., 2017). This considerable amount of literature, especially that published on behaviour during opportunity recognition and evaluation, implicitly suggests that there is a need to examine the interrelatedness of cognitive and behavioural components at any time during opportunity development.

Consequently, studying the cognition of entrepreneurs will not meaningfully contribute to an overall assessment of the entrepreneurial process without research considering entrepreneurial behaviour coupled with cognition, and potentially their combined subsequent effects on cognitive development as well as further actions throughout the process. The insight gained from engaging in taking action to disrupt the market (creation approach), which, in return, increases the alertness (discovery approach) can, therefore, contribute to the development of opportunity viewed under the mixed creation and discovery approach. Thus, the studies discussed above have considered actions even before the actual implementation of opportunity, allowing this thesis to highlight the nature of the 'opportunity' construct as evolving over a temporal period. This conception of opportunity involving actions and further cognitive changes across the three stages of entrepreneurial recognition, evaluation, and implementation was proposed by Shane

(2003). The stress on cognition and behaviour during the entrepreneurial process over time allows this thesis to contribute to improving the lack of clarity in the construct of 'opportunity'. Here, it is appropriate to view entrepreneurship as a process through which opportunity is both discovered and created by the entrepreneurs (mixed creation and discovery perspective) from cognitively interacting with their environment over time, followed by making a decision to proceed accordingly and developing the opportunity further (Gartner, 2007; Sarasvathy, 2001; Shane, 2003).

1.1.4 Contextual factors in the transition between cognition and behaviour

Early cognitive theories had considered contextual factors unconsciously affecting conscious thoughts leading to behaviour (Weick, 1995). In linking these factors with actions, it is essential to note that an individual typically seeks to form entrepreneurial beliefs perceived from both exogenous and endogenous sources before the conceptualisation of opportunities (Alvarez et al., 2013). As a result, the individual engages in the sensemaking process that evolves through the interplay between themselves and the environment, informing the development of opportunities (Weick, 1969, 1990, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking (Weick, 1969) and the sensemaking perspectives (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) had been utilised in entrepreneurship research to understand the evolution of actions over the venture's life cycle (Dutta & Thornhill, 2014; Shepherd & Krueger, 2002). Sensemaking occurs as signals challenging their historic beliefs and turning them into existing words as well as salient categories (Obstfeld, 2005;

Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001), which is then comprehended by the individual and finally turned into a form of springboard for action.

Interestingly, recent entrepreneurship research (e.g., Chang & Jetten, 2015; Peterson & Smith, 2008) provided evidence of entrepreneurs proactively focusing on specific aspects of the context more than others, which actively regulates their cognitive capabilities and mental structures over time (Hayton & Cholakova, 2012). While individuals' cognitive activities were triggered by environmental cues and their subsequent behaviour is a focus on sensemaking, confirmatory bias emphasises the individuals' tendency to keep cognitive outcomes in a particular direction more directly (Wason, 1960). The formation of business ventures has been proven to be associated with confirmatory bias in which cognitive scripts, such as knowledge arrangements, access to resources, and the willingness or commitment tolerance to recognise opportunity, serve to maintain the goals and purposes of the existence of a business (Hayton, George, & Zahra, 2002). Several studies advocate entrepreneurs/managers rejecting signals that falsify their pre-existing assumptions while searching for information (Gavetti & Rivkin, 2005; Kunda, 1987). Psychology literature highlights confirmatory bias, where cases in which some outcome is said to occur or was known to have occurred, constrain the direction of the test results (Peterson & Wong-On-Wing, 2000).

The significant effects of confirmatory bias encourage researchers to consider the construct of culture in the process of entrepreneurship, which is referred to in the

literature as ‘an organised set of beliefs, codes, myths, stereotypes, values, norms, frames, and so forth that are shared in the collective memory of a group or society’ (Zald, 1996). As sensemaking is most likely to take place in times of high uncertainty, such as during international immigration, at the levels of society or community as opposed to an individual one (Cardon et al., 2011), the entrepreneurs who are surrounded by people from the same ethnic background are more susceptible to the influence of the prevailing culture of their home country and, in the case of this research, the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London. There is a consensus that both cultural and individual values are relevant in the formation of entrepreneurial intention, which is antecedent to action (Liñán et al., 2016). This argument is based on the observation that people living in the same environment, or who used to live in a specific context, learn and share the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting, especially when it is continuously nurtured as in the case of an overseas ethnic diaspora (Hofstede, 1991; 2003). In fact, under the context of such high uncertainty as immigrant entrepreneurship, culture as a potential source of confirmatory bias can significantly influence sensemaking during opportunity development. Through the study of entrepreneurial intention leading to behaviour, action has recently been shown to be relevant to cultural values (Busenitz & Lau, 1996; Davidsson, 1995; Engle et al., 2010; Hayton et al., 2002; Krueger, 2000; 2003; Liñán et al., 2016; Moriano et al. 2012) and gained traction with scholars who attempt to link culture and entrepreneurship (Jaen & Liñán, 2015). For example, Paul et al. (2017) examined national culture and proactive personality with evidence from Japan, India, France, and the USA suggesting that, apart from an entrepreneur’s personality of proactiveness, national culture can also affect entrepreneurial intention contributing to the

competitiveness of their business. To this end, this thesis considers culture to be a predominant confirmatory bias factor upon every single action of entrepreneurship (Ahmed, 1998; Earley, 2006; Martins & Terblanche, 2003).

Although past research has suggested that entrepreneurship should be studied under a cultural umbrella due to an entrepreneur's personalities and behaviours being intertwined with the national culture from which they originate (Berger, 1991; Lee & Peterson, 2001), research on how culture affects entrepreneurial potential and the behaviour of its members remains disparate in the literature (Davidsson, 1995; Davidsson & Wiklund, 1997; Frederking, 2004; Hayton & Cacciotti, 2013; Holland & Shepherd, 2013). A body of literature on the effects of culture on entrepreneurship has employed cultural-level values theories, which rely primarily on the geographical origin of an individual, presented by the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004), Schwartz (2004), and especially Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (Hayton et al., 2002; Mcgrath & MacMillan, 1992; Mitchell et al., 2000; Mueller & Thomas, 2001; Mueller et al., 2002; Shane et al., 1991) without considering the constant effects of other intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing the decision-making and their long-term effects on subsequent actions. Two cultural dimensions that are commonly proposed to drive entrepreneurship are individualism and uncertainty avoidance (Baptista, 2010; Hayton et al., 2002; Noseleit, 2010; Stephan & Pathak, 2016; Tung et al., 2007). The major problem with culture research using prominent national-level dimensions is that it is not feasible to consistently consider ethnic entrepreneurs under the influence of these values as the various levels of integration into the

mainstream society of the host country differ from individual to individual and, hence, the mixed effects of host country and home-country culture on the entrepreneurial process.

1.1.5 Research gap: the lack of an understanding of how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunity across the stages

The above sections in this introductory chapter have identified that the staged approach to studying the entrepreneurship phenomenon shows limitations when considered alongside the impact of culture. Specifically, it is unclear as to how different cultural values affect the transitions between different stages in the process. Since it is impossible to predict the outcome of an entrepreneurial opportunity by studying factors that dominantly revolve around a particular stage, this thesis focuses on the sensemaking of opportunity that leads to the transition towards behaviour during immigrant entrepreneurship. Thus, the gap in research is identified here as the lack of an understanding of how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunity across the stages leading to behaving under the influence of culture. A behavioural attempt, no matter from which stage of the entrepreneurial process it has emerged, is considered affecting the opportunity or 'set of favourable circumstances', resulting in opportunity development. Switching between cognition and entrepreneurial behaviour may potentially lead to improved chances of both success or failure across the entire process. The flexibility in the epistemological and ontological stances in the phenomenon of opportunity is achieved through studying entrepreneurship through the lens of variation, selection, and

retention. This line of thinking indicates that the outcome of an entrepreneurial process (i.e., success or failure of idea realisation) is not entirely relevant, but instead, the action that moves an opportunity forward.

1.1.6 Concluding remarks on the introductory chapter and research gap

Taken together, recent research has shifted away from its initial focus of studying factors that influence the likelihood of individuals becoming entrepreneurs and directed it towards examining their nexus with opportunities. The stages of opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation are proposed (Shane, 2003). In response to a stream of research that calls for extensive assessments of entrepreneurship that transpires over time (Shepherd, 2015; McMullen & Dimov, 2013), both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions are considered through the sensemaking of opportunity. This thesis proposes home-country values, personal beliefs (intrinsic), and host country values and business environment (extrinsic) as dimensions affecting an entrepreneur over the stages of entrepreneurship. A combined cognitive and behavioural approach to entrepreneurship has been offered in the hope of (1) differentiating entrepreneurs from others under the same circumstances through their own intrinsic quality and (2) examining actions changing the conditions of opportunity (opportunity development). The gap is identified as the lack of an understanding of how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunity across the stages under the influence of culture.

Through the view of the sensemaking of opportunities in an uncertain environment, this thesis places a strong focus on the cognition-behaviour link and the role of home culture in influencing action across the stages of the entrepreneurial process. Specifically, this thesis aims to understand the cognitive processing of the transition between entrepreneurial opportunity and entrepreneurial action using a sensemaking approach (variation-selection-retention or VSR). Thus, this thesis does not attempt to understand the overall conditions that constitute a fruitful opportunity but instead focuses on the driving forces (culture) behind the action moving an opportunity forward in the context of immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK. Under such a context, both home and host countries' cultures have been identified to influence entrepreneurial decision-making. To the author's best understanding, little research has delved into this area of studying the impacts of the home country's culture on actions during the transition between cognition and behaviour. As a result, this thesis will explore opportunity development through the integrated cognition-behaviour process of making sense of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), forming entrepreneurial opportunities, and retaining entrepreneurial decisions to act (action/inaction) under the impact of home-country cultural dimensions. The Vietnamese cultural neo-Confucian values are identified to include fragmented, uncertainty-avoiding, stability-seeking, suspicion-oriented (or FUSS) and are found in this thesis to dominantly affect the sensemaking of opportunity during the entrepreneurial process. These Vietnamese cultural perspectives are most active amongst the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs operating in the service sector in the UK, potentially due to their lower chance of interacting with other cultures and issues associated with language barriers.

These hurdles to cultural integration encourage individuals to act under the guidance of the home-country culture to which they have had long time exposure.

This research makes several outstanding contributions to the literature. First, it explores the conditions and factors that influence sensemaking and confirmatory bias, leading to action to unpack cultural influences on opportunity development, which can have the effect of either motivating or demotivating constructive actions moving an opportunity forward (Kerr & Coviello, 2020). This consideration also advances theoretical models to explain how entrepreneurial learning develops over time (Cope, 2005) and advocates opportunities as being idiosyncratic to the individual. Thus, it encourages scholars to avoid recent proclivity to dismantle the construct of 'opportunity' (Davidsson, 2017; Woods, 2017) but instead insists on considering it as a construct that evolves from both cognitive assessment and behavioural dimensions of an opportunity by the entrepreneur. Second, it seeks to enhance the clarity of comparative entrepreneurship research comparing entrepreneurship across national contexts (Jones et al., 2011). This attempt aims to improve the inconsistent measure of the construct of culture (Hayton & Cacciotti, 2013; Kirkman et al., 2017; Schwartz, 2014), increasing understanding of the link between culture and entrepreneurship. As a result, it resolves the contradictory view on the role of cultural values such as individualism and uncertainty avoidance in entrepreneurship. Finally, the research paves the way for further studies into specific cognitive antecedents in the process of starting new ventures (Hisrich et al.; Liñán & Fayolle; McMullen et al., 2014), particularly EI and subsequent outcomes (Collewaert et al., 2016; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015) amongst the group of ethnic entrepreneurs in affluent countries, while calling for

further work on the study of opportunity from a cognitive and sensemaking perspective (Martin et al., 2013).

Following this Introduction chapter, a literature review is conducted concerning the construct of opportunity in entrepreneurship, the importance of cognitive assessments in this process, and cultural factors that influence actions. The entrepreneurial process, which transpires over time through actions and consists of intention formation, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity enactment, is explored to highlight intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting entrepreneurial behaviours. A review of the construct of culture and how it influences cognition and action during each stage of the process is highlighted. Next, an opportunity development framework is derived using Weick's (1995) sensemaking approach and Wason's (1960) confirmatory bias. Finally, the Vietnamese neo-Confucian cultural values are also identified and provided. These sections are followed by the identification of gaps in the literature and a rationale as to why filling these gaps can potentially help to move research forward. Discussions on the method of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a method will be provided, followed by the analysis (findings and discussion) of semi-structured interviews of nine (9) Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK in 2019 allowing a validation of the suggested framework. Finally, the thesis ends with the presentation and discussion of the findings against the literature and the proposed theoretical framework, followed by relevant implications and recommendations for future work.

1.2 Research Question, Aim, and Objectives

Research Question

Using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), the purpose of this research is to answer the question: *'*How *do Vietnamese entrepreneurs develop opportunity through their cultural lens during immigrant entrepreneurship?'*

Research aim

This research aims to investigate in detail the position of the cognitive processing (variation-selection-retention) that precedes entrepreneurial action under the influence of home-country culture within the context of immigrant entrepreneurship. In simple terms, this research aims to understand the cognitive processing of the transition between entrepreneurial opportunity and entrepreneurial action using a sensemaking approach (variation-selection-retention or VSR).

Research Objectives

This thesis particularly seeks to address the following four objectives considered under the influence of cultural values amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs:

- To critically validate the concept of entrepreneurial opportunity.
- To critically assess how each stage of the VSR is related to opportunity amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs.
- To critically examine the influence of culture on each stage of the VSR amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs.
- To critically evaluate the transition between opportunity and action amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises five (5) main chapters, described as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction provides an overview of the background of the study. This chapter first highlights how entrepreneurship research has changed in the past few decades, moving from personality traits towards a staged approach (entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial recognition, entrepreneurial evaluation, and entrepreneurial implementation) and how it arrives at the current point where research in entrepreneurial action becomes a focus. It then introduces the concept of opportunity development, which is understood as a change in how an entrepreneurial opportunity is viewed by the entrepreneur under the conditions of action having been taken. The gap here is identified as the lack of an understanding of how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunity across the entrepreneurial stages. Finally, the last section presents the purpose of this research (research question, aim, and four relevant objectives).

Chapter 2: The Literature Review is divided into six major parts. Part one (1) reviews the concept of entrepreneurship, followed by an exploration of various forms of opportunity and justification for their use in this research. Part two (2) discusses the entrepreneurial process (consisting of the four stages of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation) and identifies the research gap. This part demonstrates that an enquiry into the cognition of entrepreneurs is required to move research forward. Part three (3) reviews the literature on sensemaking and confirmatory bias, as well as the properties of sensemaking. A conceptual model of

Opportunity Development Framework is proposed to illustrate that intrinsic (home-country culture, personal beliefs) and extrinsic (host country culture, business environment) factors can affect entrepreneurial cognition and behaviour, and hence the overall entrepreneurial process. This part particularly highlights the need to derive a more holistic approach to viewing opportunity development considering cognition and behaviour, together with relevant intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Following the consideration of culture affecting the cognition of the entrepreneur, part four (4) reviews culture in more detail and highlights the role of the home country's cultural values viewed under sensemaking and confirmatory bias perspectives. Next, part five (5) reviews neo-Confucian values amongst the Vietnamese derived from the historical, economic, and political contexts of Vietnam. This section provides the thesis with four dominant cultural values of a typical Vietnamese individual (i.e., fragmented, uncritical, suspicion-seeking, and stability-oriented or FUSS). The chapter ends with a remark on entrepreneurship as a process and the proposed theoretical framework for this research in Part six (6).

Chapter 3: This chapter introduces the ontological and epistemological stance of this research and describes the interpretive phenomenological approach and the arguments on why the IPA methodology is a suitable method for this. It researches the sensemaking of opportunity development amongst the group of nine (9) Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London, UK, and the challenge that occurred during the research process.

Chapter 4: This chapter discusses the findings from the preliminary analysis under the four main themes identified through the process of free imagination analysis. Discussion

of findings in relation to the theoretical framework, the broader literature, research question, and research objectives are provided. It also highlights the significance and theoretical and practical implications of the research results in connection with the relevant literature.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides a conclusion to the research study and brief remarks on entrepreneurship as a process that transpires over time and the findings of this research in contrast with the literature and the theoretical framework derived in Chapter 2. The chapter then provides a brief description of the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions, research limitations, and recommendations for future work.

CHAPTER 2: THE IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR

This chapter will review the literature relating to 1) entrepreneurship and opportunity, 2) the entrepreneurial process, 3) sensemaking and confirmatory bias linking cognition and action during opportunity development, 4) culture in entrepreneurship, 5) the Vietnamese neo-Confucian culture, and 6) a theoretical framework for this research. The gap is identified as how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunity over the stages of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation. A theoretical framework is then proposed to guide the discussion of research findings as well as the relevant theoretical and practical implications at the end of this thesis.

2.1 Part I: Understanding Entrepreneurial Opportunity

2.1.1 The concept of entrepreneurship

A myriad of studies published on entrepreneurs acting as drivers of a productive economy indicates the importance of entrepreneurial activities to economic growth (Carree & Thurik, 2010; Ketchen, 2003; Venkataraman, 1997). While scholarly thinking about the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has traditionally been immense (e.g., Casson, 1982; Kirzner, 1973; Schumpeter, 1934; Shane & Venkataraman, 2003), scholars often find it challenging to provide a unified answer to the core of entrepreneurship research. As described by Audretsch (2012), this issue with entrepreneurship research is the result of the fact that entrepreneurship is still in the chaotic pre-paradigmatic stage of

development. The field is represented by heterogeneity concerning approaches and methodologies emanating from different allied areas, and even the complexity of understanding the exact components constituting entrepreneurship. Although research on entrepreneurship has been well received in management journals (e.g., being ranked highly in the Academy of Management Journal with over 2,700 members in its Entrepreneurship division), several seemingly unrelated concepts have been studied in parallel ranging from the individual and corporate level to the national level.

Despite these efforts to study the entrepreneurship phenomenon, scholars continue to demonstrate a lack of agreement on a common definition of entrepreneurship. It has happened that definitions of the concept and constructs of studies of the field have depended on the researcher's conceptualisation of what constitutes entrepreneurship, and hence, variations in the study focus and measurement of entrepreneurship. In an attempt to untangle the concept of entrepreneurship towards a common perspective, Mwatsika, Kambewa & Chiwaula (2018) argued that the underlying force of entrepreneurship is essentially human behaviour with driving motives that are based on definitive competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities. The behaviour is purposively exerted, involves various activities and judgmental decisions that are undertaken through a process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities to create socioeconomic value under conditions of uncertainty (i.e., the new organisation). For example, Eckhardt and Shane (2003, p. 336) defined entrepreneurship '...as the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of future goods and services ... [by] ... creation or identification of new ends and means previously undetected or unutilised by market participants'. Entrepreneurship

was also defined as the identification and exploitation of business opportunities within the individual–opportunity nexus (Shane & Venkataraman 2000). Here, it can be seen that there are many working definitions, but for the purposes of this chapter, entrepreneurship is defined as 'the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources you currently control' (Stevenson, 1983, 1985; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1991).

The various streams of entrepreneurship research include, but are not limited to, strategic entrepreneurship involving simultaneous opportunity-seeking and advantage-seeking behaviours (Ireland et al., 2003), intrapreneurship studying the innovation within an organisation (Covin & Miles, 1999; Guth & Ginsberg, 1990; Hitt et al., 2002; Miller, 1983; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990), environmental-ecological entrepreneurship focusing on environmental issues (Schaltegger & Peterson, 2001), sustainable entrepreneurship exploring the purpose of the business beyond the monetary bottom line (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007; Katsikis & Kyrgidou, 2007), social entrepreneurship identifying how a business venture can satisfy both social goals and economic incentives (Peredo et al., 2006), institutional entrepreneurship focusing on organisational learning to create value (Augier & Sarasvathy, 2004; Xu & Ruef, 2004), public entrepreneurship studying innovative policies in a public sector environment (Feldman, 2005; Kelman, 2005; Morris & Jones, 1999; Roberts, 1992), philanthropic entrepreneurship attempting to improve the life conditions of people (Acs & Dana, 2001), and distributed entrepreneurship making patents accessible to younger firms or entrepreneurs in many different ways (Bureth & Pénin, 2006).

Amongst these different strands of research, this thesis studies the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship, focusing on how ethnic immigrants navigate uncertainty to survive in a new environment as they establish their entrepreneurial journey. This part of the literature review provides explicitly the reason why scholars need to study both the cognition and behaviour of entrepreneurs while opportunities are being developed. The study advocates a universal conception of entrepreneurship by exploring the concept of opportunity (creation/discovery) as the central unit of analysis and the change in its conditions caused by behaviour. The cognition-behaviour interaction helps research explain how different forms of business activity and entrepreneurs adapt and evolve to survive, given the same pre-conditional circumstances before embarking on the entrepreneurial journey.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial opportunity: What does it mean?

One current prominent issue with entrepreneurship research is that scholars generally grapple with the duality of two leading schools of thought when studying the opportunity phenomenon. These lines of thinking are opportunity creation and opportunity discovery (Chetty et al., 2018). Under this classification, it has been argued that every single entrepreneur can both create and discover opportunities. It is through this process that 'entrepreneurship', which is defined as 'the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources one currently controls', is made possible (Stevenson, 1983, 1985; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1991). Opportunity, as an institutionalised construct (Woods, 2017), refers to 'a set of favourable circumstances' that allows the emergence of a need for a business, service,

or product (Barringer, 2012). This thesis views entrepreneurship through the mixed creation and discovery approach and focuses on the sensemaking of it, leading to entrepreneurial behaviour (or action) that moves the opportunity forward.

2.1.3 Conceptualising Entrepreneurial Opportunity

Table 2.1.1 below illustrates the views on the concept of opportunity of this thesis. Here, opportunity is divided into four variations, Innovation-opportunity focus, Arbitrage-opportunity focus, Opportunity creation (behaviour-oriented), and Opportunity discovery (behaviour-oriented). Specifically, the two former approaches were prominent in early entrepreneurship research, while the two latter views as their two extensions with a focus on behaviour are more common amongst current entrepreneurship literature.

The main difference between the first pair and the second pair is that the latter places a greater emphasis on studying action during the entrepreneurial process. This thesis focuses on the latter pair (i.e., Opportunity creation and Opportunity discovery) as the research question seeks to understand the transition between cognition and behaviour.

Conceptualisation	Determining characteristics	Root
Innovation-opportunity focus	Entrepreneur invents and engages in 'creative destruction' to create disequilibrium and changes in markets.	German school (economic)
Arbitrage-opportunity focus	Entrepreneur, alert to market information and supply-demand inefficiencies, brings the market back to equilibrium.	Austrian school (economic)
Opportunity creation (behaviour-oriented)	Entrepreneur creates opportunities through social interaction under true uncertainty and enacts in everyday entrepreneurial practice.	Schumpeterian
Opportunity discovery (behaviour-oriented)	Entrepreneur actively manifests new markets and produces a complex entity under risky conditions to discover opportunities.	Kirznerian

Table 2.1.1: Conceptualisations of entrepreneurial opportunities (Author's Own)

Hebert and Link (1989) suggested a taxonomy of entrepreneurship that emerged out of economic standpoints from the work of William Baumol including the German tradition (Schumpeterian), the Chicago tradition (Knightian), and the Austrian tradition (Kirznerian). First, the Schumpeterian theory views entrepreneurship as a disrupting phenomenon giving a particular role in entrepreneurship to creativity and innovation

performed by the entrepreneur. This line of thinking proposes creative destruction where new ventures/entrepreneurs with particular entrepreneurial characteristics attempt to disrupt the stationary/closed equilibrium status to displace less innovative incumbents, thus leading to a higher degree of economic growth through 'new combinations' of technology or total innovation' (Landström, 2005). Generally, Schumpeter (1934) proposed that creativity primarily acts as an endogenous cause of economic development based on the idea of a temporary disturbance condition caused by entrepreneurs (Van Praag, 1999). Second, Knight (1921) emphasised the role of risk (including uncertainty, risk, and true uncertainty) as central dimensions in the entrepreneurial environment that is always 'uncertain' and 'risky'. The entrepreneur in Knight's view (or Knight and Schultz's perspective) is someone who bears these kinds of uncertainty and faces uninsurable business outcomes as they decide to engage in entrepreneurial activities (van Praag, 1999). Knight (1921) further explained that the entrepreneur often finds opportunities arising out of several changes in the environment related to humanity, technology, industry, or policy (or in simple terms: 'uncertainty') and acts on these 'risky' conditions to receive rewards for facing the 'true uncertainty' (Landström et al., 2012). Here, these triggering events can lead to a situation where uncertainty is turned into true uncertainty through risky behaviour as the entrepreneur acts on the opportunity. Finally, Kirzner (1979) argued that the fundamental entrepreneurial activity involves 'seeing' previously unnoticed opportunities for profit, highlighting entrepreneurial alertness. Scholars have found that the Kirznerian view has, in part, been inspired by Knightian uncertainty, but also focuses on the ability to anticipate uncertain events. Here, the Kirznerian view proposes that someone who is more alert to

environmental changes can better anticipate an opportunity compared to someone who is less precise in making such predictions (von Mises, 1949).

These three different views on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship have resulted in a plethora of unified findings amongst researchers (Bloom, 2014). The scattered studies have led to the suggestion in more recent work, namely The Language of Opportunity by Gartner, Carter, and Hills (2003), to discount the view of Knight, with which this thesis agrees. This thesis follows such a suggestion to focus on 1) the interpretative/social constructionist position (i.e., the Schumpeterian tradition), which is predominant with researchers mainly in Europe, and 2) the positivist/realist position (i.e., the Kirznerian tradition), which is prevalent among North American researchers. Specifically, the Schumpeterian tradition focusing on innovation opportunity promotes the role of an entrepreneur's interpretation of perceptions and understanding of the environmental forces in enacting emerging opportunities and disturbing an existing equilibrium market situation. In the Schumpeterian school of thought, entrepreneurs engage in 'creative destruction' that introduces new solutions of higher value to the markets, compared with the existing options, and challenges the status quo (Schumpeter, 1934; Zahra, 2005). Alternatively, the Kirznerian view focusing on arbitrage opportunity suggests that there is always a market disequilibrium; that entrepreneurial opportunity and the environment are separate entities, and entrepreneurs are those who discover opportunities and act to bring the market back into its equilibrium position. In this tradition, the market is regarded as representing arbitrage opportunities recognised through individual perceptions (Anokhin et al., 2011; Autio, 2005; Kirzner, 1973).

Recent entrepreneurship research has, however, placed a sharper focus on the broad context of reasons, purposes, and values for why and how entrepreneurship emerges, criticising this widespread past tendency amongst scholars to only study a tiny group of outliers as in the cases of Bill Gates, Richard Branson, Steve Jobs or Elon Musk, while frequently ignoring the vast bulk and diversity of what we label 'everyday entrepreneurship' (Welter, Baker, Audretsch & Gartner, 2017). For example, the Mittelstand model of entrepreneurship has been suggested as the antithesis of the impression of the Silicon Valley model based on its diversity and long-term orientation and beyond wealth and job creation (Pahnke & Welter, 2019). In this model, entrepreneurs as independent decision-makers (individual or family business owners) actively own and develop and bear the risks and liabilities of their companies in the legal form of a sole proprietorship (Gantzel, 1962). It is potentially for this reason that a considerable amount of entrepreneurship research has been adapted into two more recent approaches to entrepreneurship, namely opportunity discovery and opportunity creation, with a stronger focus on everyday actions that move an opportunity forward (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; 2010). The two newly-adopted approaches have their roots in Schumpeterian and Kirznerian views on opportunities, albeit exhibiting a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurial behaviours along with the phases of the entrepreneurial process (Shane, 2003).

Alvarez and Barney (2007) described 'discovery' and 'creation' as a mountain-climbing and mountain-building approach to entrepreneurship, respectively. For example,

innovative products such as the iPhone 3 are considered the outcome of an opportunity creation effort focusing on making a new market structure. In contrast, the iPad is discovered through the increasing demand of customers for a smart device with a bigger screen size. These conceptualisations, however, share the commonality that they both revolve around value creation and competitive imperfections or innovation (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Venkataraman et al., 2012). Advancement in understanding the entrepreneurship phenomenon cannot be made without considering what the entrepreneurs will do about these disruptions and noticing the market information.

Opportunity creation to produce and sell new products or services does not exist until the entrepreneur acts to create the products (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Gartner, 1985; Sarasvathy, 2001; Weick, 1979). A relevant extension of the opportunity creation approach to entrepreneurship is the 'effectuation' method proposed for students at universities and for those who have little capital to fund their projects initially. Andersson (2011) stated that human action is the most critical factor driving the future of the business as the effectuation processes (initially proposed by Sarasvathy, 2001) are mainly based on an available set of their characteristics (who they are: personality, hobbies, traits, and capabilities), their knowledge (what they know) and their networks (whom they know). However, prior research still reveals effectuation both as contradictory and complementary to the discovery approach, where a (predefined) goal as the desired output has been set so that tasks can be done to accomplish it through a contingent development process (Arend et al., 2015).

Opportunity discovery, based on the Kirznerian tradition, highlights the roles of individual perceptions leading to action. It adopts the assumption that exogenous shocks form opportunities to pre-existing structures such as industry or market changes or technological inventions beyond the influence of an entrepreneur's action, which are exploited by unusual individuals or firms through 'alertness' (Alvarez & Barney, 2010; Kirzner, 1989; Shane, 2000). In this case, the entrepreneur views the opportunity as an objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered through their alertness or by surprise. On the other hand, an entrepreneur can see their opportunity as a result of their effort in creating shocks in an unknown market and act endogenously to advance it in their preferred direction or disrupt the market structure (Alvarez & Barney, 2010). Under these descriptions, entrepreneurial discovery focuses on studying the cognitive factors residing within the entrepreneur's cognition concerning how they discover opportunity, e.g., Spotify as a popular music app. The second view, opportunity creation, which is based on the Schumpeter tradition, assumes that entrepreneurs endogenously form the opportunities themselves through an enactment process, e.g., experimental learning (Kolb, 1984), learning by doing (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Venkataraman, 2003), and effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001).

2.1.4 Justification of Entrepreneurial Opportunity for this thesis

There is a growing body of literature that recognises that entrepreneurial opportunity (or sometimes ambiguously understood as an idea) must be executed (or realised in the case of an entrepreneurial idea) and commercialised to make entrepreneurship

meaningful (Alvarez et al., 2010; Navis & Ozbek, 2016), emphasising the importance of action along this process. Wood et al. (2012) suggested that the ontological debate on opportunity creation and discovery – or, more specifically, whether entrepreneurial opportunities are best promoted as objective artefacts or subjectively driven 'realities' – will not meaningfully contribute to moving research forward. Although it is essential to understand about opportunities by subjective discovery through mountain climbing (Kirzner, 1979; Shane, 2003) or mountain building, where ideas gradually emerge from the creative entrepreneur's imagination (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Wood & McKinley, 2010), how experience evolves to become insight through the entrepreneur's cognition and action causing the opportunities to develop is also essential. To address this conflict in entrepreneurship research, it is contended that a more holistic view of entrepreneurship may, and should, provide an examination of the underlying conditions of intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions that preside over the emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities (Plummer et al., 2007) considering both external environmental forces and the individual's perceptions. Thus, entrepreneurship may be deemed as an ongoing by-product of these interactions. It is arguable, then, that those variations in the perception of the progress of an opportunity are subjective, and the environment continually influences the shaping of this perception. This helps explain the reason why this thesis focuses on the sensemaking of opportunity since it is vital to consider the mechanism through which such a change is introduced across opportunity development. In this thesis, the external environmental forces and internal factors are considered extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions, respectively. Taken together, the core of entrepreneurship combines entrepreneurial discovery and creation of values. It is important to note that, although

studies such as Alvarez and Barney (2010) have called for an explicit examination of these two epistemologically different views and argued that they could hardly coexist, this thesis agrees with Chiasson and Saunders (2005) and Venkataraman et al. (2012). These authors saw discovery and creation as complementary approaches, proclaiming that both views hold legitimacy and that opportunities are being found and made by engaging in behaviour.

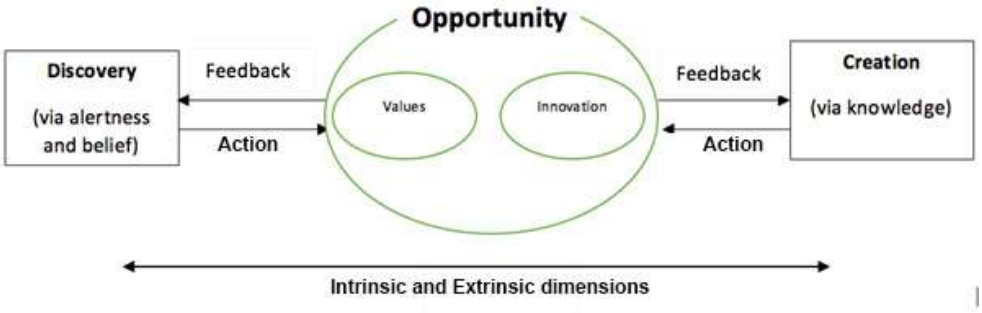


Figure 2.1.1: Entrepreneurial Opportunity, External Environment, and Individual factors (Author's Own)

This thesis focuses on the sensemaking of values and innovation as components of entrepreneurial opportunity (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Venkataraman et al., 2012) that potentially influence the decision to take action amongst entrepreneurs. This conception acts as a basis for identifying how a Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneur perceives opportunity before taking action in the research findings and discussion. A specific set of individual values is often used by an entrepreneur to make decisions about how to behave in situations (that are meaningful to them). These values also drive self-determined human action (Kirkley, 2016), which range from intrinsic values (e.g., ethical,

financial, abstract beliefs about desirable goals guiding individuals; Bolzani and Der Foo, 2018; Gagnon, 2012) to extrinsic values such as social and environmental awareness and cultural norms (Wieck et al., 2011). Besides, the innovation component refers to entrepreneurial activities that enable radical or incremental changes to the operation of a business or market. Radical innovations involve the development of revolutionary new business models and technologies that significantly change the lives of many people.

In contrast, incremental innovation often seeks to moderately improve existing systems, markets and products (e.g., to make products faster at the same price or cheaper with the same quality) (Coccia, 2017). There are several aspects of innovation that are not strongly considered in this thesis. For example, innovation performance as an outcome of innovation helps respond to questions of why innovation is necessary and whether incremental and radical innovation performance would depend on different types of knowledge accumulation capabilities, and whether organisational size is relevant to improving innovation performance (Forés and Camisó, 2016). However, due to this thesis focusing on action that follows the perception of opportunity, only aspects such as cooperation and competition in new product development as sources of incremental and radical innovation (Bouncken et al., 2018) are considered as the competition can potentially be influenced by cultural values amongst the group of immigrant entrepreneurs. To this end, this thesis is inspired by Biberhofer et al.'s (2019) framework who suggested opportunity structures to include social, environmental and contextual mechanisms, organisational context and processes, and levels of action towards the triple bottom line.

2.2 Part II: The Entrepreneurial Process

This section will explore the concept of opportunity and opportunity development through the four stages of intention formation, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation and opportunity implementation to address the need to consider the cognition-behaviour view in entrepreneurship research. The gap is identified based on the argument that viewing entrepreneurship through the four stages of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation shows limitation as we do not understand how individuals make sense of such opportunity.

2.2.1 The four stages of entrepreneurship

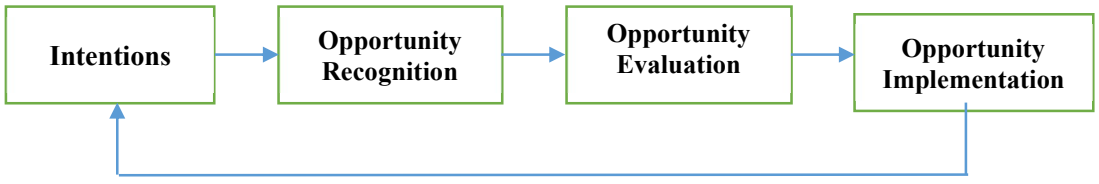
The process of dealing with opportunity by the entrepreneur is widely argued to be central to entrepreneurship (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). With the aim to further distinguish itself as a separate research domain and avoid debating in detail the ontological and epistemological natures of opportunity discovery and creation (e.g., Ardichivili, Cardozo & Ray, 2003; Busenitz & Lau, 1996; Covin & Slevin, 1991; Gartner, 1985; Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003; Shane, 2003; for a review see Moroz & Hindle, 2012), most of the recent literature has adopted a static framework with *a priori* stages (major tasks defined) as opposed to a process dynamic design (Churchill & Bygrave, 1989; Low & MacMillan, 1988; Ucbasaran et al., 2001). A typical model proposed by Shane (2003) suggests that an entrepreneur transitions through three stages of the entrepreneurial process, namely *opportunity recognition*, *evaluation*, and *implementation*. Minimal studies have examined

the iterative nature of this stage-focused process of entrepreneurship, which emerges from the intention phase to the decision to execute an opportunity in order to develop further opportunities over time (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014), but rather studied the mechanism of each stage independently. This trend seems to have emerged out of the ease of borrowing and integrating theories in related disciplines, such as psychology and cognition research, in which the focus is on a specific aspect of the overall entrepreneurial process (Haugh, 2012).

To improve the overall picture of opportunity development, the statement that is often heard is that if a study attempts to record and understand changes in the conditions of opportunity over time, it can be considered research on 'process' and its success depends on the research question and setting (Davidsson, 2017). Baron (2007) observed selected cognitive and behavioural factors to understand how the iterative process of opportunity recognition or creation and learning occurs in intending to run, launch, and operate new entrepreneurial ventures. This thesis suggests that scholars should expand the working definition of the factors in connection with 'cognitive and behavioural' e.g., self-regulatory and metacognitive, skills to more efficiently understand the complex process of entrepreneurship. Following this line of argument, Dyer et al. (2008) studied seventy-two (72) innovative entrepreneurs and three hundred and ten (310) executives on four behavioural patterns through which they acquire information and process it cognitively, including questioning, observing, experimenting, and idea networking. In this study, the authors suggested that novel ideas for innovative ventures are generated based on one's

ability to act effectively in accordance with the four patterns, which ultimately trigger a cognitive process to refine the ideas further.

An articulate investigation into how entrepreneurs cognitively plan and take actions accordingly to move the entrepreneur across the stages of the entrepreneurial process, informing opportunity development, remains scarce in the literature, especially when it comes to understanding the iterative link between cognition and behaviour (Dimov, 2010; Wood et al., 2012). Prior research identifies that entrepreneurial intentions are the single best predictor of planned behaviour during the entrepreneurial process (Ajzen, 1991; Bagozzi et al., 1989; Krueger et al., 2000). This thesis supports that entrepreneurship is a process that emerges through the iterative stages of forming entrepreneurial intention (EI), cognitively processing information during opportunity recognition illustrated through perceived ideas, taking action to evaluate these ideas, and implementing multiple behaviours to move the venture forward.



Adapted from Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud (2000) and Shane (2003).

Figure 2.2.1: The Entrepreneurial Process (Author's Own)

2.2.2 Entrepreneurial Intentions

Section 2.1 of this chapter has highlighted the importance of the interaction between action and behaviour as well as the intrinsic and extrinsic factors around the entrepreneurial process, which allows opportunity development. EI is accepted as the first stage of the entrepreneurial process, driving the entrepreneurs to perform the behaviour, which is traditionally thought to lead to the physical business start-up process (Krueger, 1993). EI is a crucial factor in informing planned behaviour (Liñán & Chen, 2009). Since EI is accepted as the commitment to performing a behaviour that drives the physical business start-up process (Krueger, 1993) and the conscious state of mind that precedes action and directs attention towards business start-up as the goal (Bird, 1988; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Shook et al., 2003), it may be argued that the construct of EI is a form of intentional effort on making sense of the environment, while internally it works on adjusting cognitive heuristics of the entrepreneur. Gollwitzer and colleagues expand this identifying goal intention and implementation intention (Gollwitzer 1993, 1999; Gollwitzer & Brandstatter, 1997; Gollwitzer & Schaal, 1998). Goal intention acts at the level of strategy, whilst implementation intention refers to the process of plan-making (Martijn et al., 2008; Papies et al., 2009). While the implementation intention involves thinking about performing a behaviour and the TPB addresses the first type of goal intention in this categorisation (Gollwitzer & Brandstatter, 1997), it is evident that the term 'entrepreneurial intentions' only accounts for the first phase of goal intention (Adam & Fayolle, 2016). Individuals who form an entrepreneurial implementation intention (EII) detailing a specific plan of where, when, and how the desired behaviour will be performed, are more likely to act on their intentions (Fayolle & Liñán, 2014; Gollwitzer, 1999)

compared to entrepreneurial goal intention. It is important to note that one phase cannot exist without the other, or they are either conjointly or subsequently formed (Gollwitzer, 1993). As a result, the assessment may be incomplete if the intention is considered without including the behaviour-oriented thinking phase that follows.

Two models informing EI literature are the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the entrepreneurial event model (EEM) (Shook et al., 2003; Solesvik et al., 2012). Among the two theories, TPB has been most utilised in research on EI. The literature on entrepreneurship using TPB has grown significantly over the past two decades since Icek Ajzen (1988; 1991) originally published the theoretical framework attempting to predict the behaviours of individuals. It started gaining more traction amongst researchers in entrepreneurship during the early 2000s as the seminal works of, for example, Krueger and Reilly (2000), Krueger et al. (2000) and Shook et al. (2003), argued that entrepreneurship was an intentional process consisting of cognitively planned behaviours. TPB conceptualises one's behaviour to be preceded by their intention to perform, which is determined by their (1) favourable or unfavourable attitude towards target behaviour, (2) subjective norms based on the opinions of social reference groups (e.g., family, friends, mentors) towards the behaviour, and (3) perceived behavioural control (PBC) of the ease or difficulty of performing. Ajzen (1991, p.188) explained the attitude a person holds towards a behaviour as 'the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question'. While subjective norms refer to the perception of the degree to which referent others agree or disagree with performing the behaviour, PBC deals with how easy or

difficult performing a behaviour by the individual is perceived. Armitage and Connor (2001) believed that when one has complete volitional control over their behaviour, the intention is a reliable predictor of behaviour, while PBC becomes dominant in the decision to act if this control begins to drop.

In the original Ajzen (1991) model, it is also suggested that PBC can directly influence behaviour. In other words, when an entrepreneur perceives that an opportunity is not substantially in their control, the individual will become less prone to act in spite of favourable attitudes and high subjective norms. Generally, there are intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to performing behaviour from having established an intention to act that need to be thoroughly addressed. To illustrate this point, Sawang et al. (2014) investigated students who were introduced to a new virtual learning facility confirming the buffering role of social influence on collectivistic culture, i.e., a moderating role found for the subjective norm and PCB on adoption intent as opposed to the parallel relationships between the TPB's three factors. However, following this strand of argument, the TPB has been cut up and compartmentalised for authors' individual uses (Lortie & Castogiovanni, 2015), which potentially caused inconsistency in the results of the studies on the entrepreneurial intention that followed. As such, there has been insufficient evidence confirming the association between intentions and behaviours (Kautonen et al., 2015). Therefore, EI literature has demonstrated that forming an intention is a preliminary stage, and fruitful intention attainment requires further factors, e.g., instability, limited elaboration, insufficient excitement, and competing goals (Gollwitzer, 1990; 2012; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Van Gelderen et al., 2015).

Literature in neuroscience distinguishes two aspects of intentions, namely immediate intention and prospective intention (Pacherie, 2008), that share characteristics with what was previously referred to as unconscious initiation of action (Libet et al., 1983) and delayed intention (Kvavilashvili & Ellis, 1996) respectively. An intention requires a conscious decision to act in a certain way; and, to make intention meaningful, an action must be followed (Mele, 1992). While the action may follow immediately after making a decision (immediate intentions), the individual may postpone a behaviour until some designated future moment (prospective intentions). Such an attitude in implementing action allows cognitive errors (substitution errors, memory loss) to occur during remembering (Brandimonte et al., 2014). Even if errors are detected after one starts to realise an intention, the individual may engage in the error recovery stage and, thus, will employ multiple immediate intentions and behaviours during this process (Blavier et al., 2005). In consideration of time and space, Rutter et al. (2006) suggested that the process of transforming intention into behaviour is governed by the attitude towards target, action, time and context, or conflict that may occur leading to the intention not being implemented. Based on this view from the lens of the TPB, the subjective norms depend mainly on the referent groups or referent others.

Similarly, neuroscience literature on motor resonance, the subliminal activation of the motor system and imitative response while observing actions performed by others in the environment (Heyes, 2011), suggests a high possibility of failure in implementing an intention across time and space. This study asserts that, in order to successfully

transition from an intention to action, there are three layers comprising (1) motor representations including individual goal intention, e.g., undertaking business start-up; (2) intention in action or sequence of movements e.g., business plan development, contacting suppliers etc.; and (3) motor command or the elements of movements, e.g., to meet with an experienced entrepreneur, initiate research for the business plan (Ciaramidaro et al., 2007; Wolpert et al., 2003). It has been demonstrated that there is no one-to-one relationship between perceived input (goal intention) and meaning (performing behaviours) when time and space for interpretation are lacking (De Vignemont, 2010). Thus, moving across space over time will permit an influence from the external environmental factors which might not be perceived by the individual. The above argument highlighting the importance of thinking about behaviour even before the venture is formed and the intrinsic/extrinsic barriers to action works as a guiding light to authors who are adopting intention models to predict the entrepreneurship phenomenon before it occurs (Krueger et al., 2000; Pruett et al., 2009).

In general, although entrepreneurship has recently been argued to unfold through a temporal process (Gartner & Shane, 1995), undergirded by human cognition and agency (McMullen & Dimov, 2013), it is surprising that little research has adequately studied the role of both cognition and behaviour during the formation of intention. The EI must be coupled with several behavioural efforts in order to further refine the idea before moving onto opportunity recognition. For example, culture as a major source of influence on the cognition of the entrepreneur has been overseen in research on the behaviour of the entrepreneur. Such consideration can be seen in studies that employ longitudinal designs

and suggest that the three components of TPB need to be viewed in reference to the temporality and fluctuation of cognition (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015; Gielnik et al., 2014; Kautonen, van Gelderen & Fink, 2015). Specifically, attitude can be explained in terms of stable entities stored in long-term memory or as available short-term information as a reference in which the long-term memory refers to the home-country culture, and the short-term information indicates the host-country culture (Gawronski, 2007). This thesis, therefore, suggests that culture should be studied during the cognition-behaviour transition and particularly during EI, and the sensemaking of opportunity is necessary to make this process possible.

2.2.3 Opportunity Recognition

How do entrepreneurs recognise opportunities to act after having established an EI? The question related to ways to recognise opportunity is not new within the literature of entrepreneurship. In the late 1990s, researchers continued to pay more attention to this stage of the entrepreneurial process (Hills & Singh, 1998). Generally, the stage of opportunity recognition is widely viewed as a critical step in the entrepreneurial process following the formation of EI (Baron, 2008). Once an entrepreneur has been able to get started with a potential idea, the smooth transition into evaluation and implementation is more likely to happen. There has been much debate in the field about how entrepreneurs recognise opportunities (Bhave, 1994). However, little research has adequately identified the mechanism through which various intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence

opportunity recognition in general. Specifically, how culture influences the recognition of opportunity remained unexplored in previous studies.

George et al. (2016) suggested that the study of opportunity recognition is underdeveloped and fragmented and insufficient attention has been paid by scholars in the field (both authors and journals) to reconcile this. Bygrave and Hofer (1991) previously suggested that no holistic method of study had been employed by earlier theorists as to how entrepreneurs recognise opportunity, which seems to remain true up to this point as conflicting views still exist in the literature. For example, the contemporary advocates of Schumpeter (1934) and Kirzner (1979) as the two schools of thoughts that permeate entrepreneurship research, namely Shane (2000) and Baron (2006), showed inconsistencies in their views in regard to the preconditions surrounding opportunity during recognition. For Shane (2000), one or more conditions must be identified by the entrepreneurs through their cognitive alertness to make sure that an opportunity exists. In contrast, these conditions are created in Baron's (2006) view through action. The implication of this distinction on the two views is enormous, mainly relating to how a potential entrepreneur approaches opportunity during this stage as they attempt to identify a workable idea. In the case of a highly visible demand for a product, opportunity recognition can be achieved through the matched market demand and solution(s) that was previously unfulfilled, followed by an exploration of new ways to manage such a demand (Bhave, 1994). Alternatively, if the demand is less visible, opportunity recognition is considered equivalent to a disruptive effort, which is often recognised post hoc once actions have been taken to realise the idea (O'Connor & Rice, 2001). Here, the major issue

with these dichotomous views is the fact that the visibility of a condition can be more evident to one entrepreneur compared to another only at a particular time, leading to the recent view of integrating them simultaneously rather than engaging in this ongoing debate of the ontological existence of opportunity recognition (Chiasson & Saunders, 2005).

Based on Bygrave and Hofer's (1991) classification of opportunity recognition as a legitimate topic in its own right, Shaver and Scott (1991) suggested that scholars should study the psychology of entrepreneurs and the elements of the thinking process (e.g., unique cognitive heuristics) to identify why some individuals can see the unique potential of a situation as an opportunity, while others, when presented with the same information, choose not to pursue it. Accordingly, scholars studying opportunity recognition have explored a number of prominent factors that increase the chance of an entrepreneur engaging in business activities. For example, the factors that shape opportunity recognition that have emerged in the past three decades include individual traits and personalities (Chiaburu et al., 2011), information asymmetry (Hayek, 1945), human and social capital e.g., gender differences (Ramos-Rodríguez et al., 2010), experiential learning (Corbett, 2005), pattern recognition perspective (Baron, 2008), prior knowledge (Shane, 2000), and social cognition (Vaghely & Julien, 2008). From an overall perspective, these studies revolve around three general concepts of personality traits (McClelland, 1961), alertness levels of the entrepreneur (Gaglio & Katz 2001), and social networks (Singh, 2000), which are related to creation, discovery and the mixed approach, respectively. These factors help research to more thoroughly explain the alertness of

entrepreneurs (Baron, 2006; Shane, 2000). Little research, however, has specifically studied the role of culture during opportunity recognition. This lack of research into the link between culture and opportunity is surprising given factors such as experiential learning, and social networks are directly related to culture, e.g., legitimation processes of entrepreneurship determine the level of entrepreneurship activities in society and even in different periods within the same society (Etzioni, 1987).

Through the dense literature on opportunity recognition, three categories have been promoted as determinants of the entrepreneur's detection of fruitful conditions (Baron, 2007; Dufays & Huybrechts, 2014; Kaish & Gilad, 1991) including searching and scanning, asymmetric information as a result of prior knowledge, and entrepreneurial alertness. The first and second categories share several commonalities related to the extensive use of cognition. A search effort (which can be deliberate or accidental) must use what is called cognitive structures (Mitchell et al., 2002) that interact with environmental factors such as the economic, societal, political, and technological forces to discover or create opportunity. This is achieved through the process of making connections and associations between prior knowledge and the new knowledge, and sometimes through the asymmetric information previously acquired, to create a new cognitive structure of a fruitful opportunity (Dew et al., 2015) – or, in Shane and Venkataraman's (2002) language, a new means-ends relationship, or 'connecting the dots' (Baron, 2006). Interestingly, there is also commonality between such new cognitive structures and entrepreneurial alertness (Kirzner, 1997) in a way that, through placing oneself in the right position where one can acquire valuable information about the market through the previously acquired

conception of a successful business model and making sense of the information in a unique way (Breslin, 2017), alertness can take place.

Recent scholars further promote opportunity recognition revolving around the entrepreneurial actor and the environment. For example, Baron (2006) connected environment, prior knowledge, alertness, and systematic search to opportunity recognition through cognition, while stressing the importance of social capital during opportunity recognition. This line of thinking suggests that opportunity can emerge from changes in the environment (e.g., technology, demography, and regulations) with new information that entrepreneurs need to understand (the Schumpeterian view) by using the common cognitive frameworks they have acquired through experience (the Kerznerian view). The pertinent role of social networks is also discussed as providing possibilities for individuals to refine their cognitive frameworks, pointing at more fruitful social cognitive frameworks (Kim & Baylor, 2006) and more recently situated entrepreneurial cognition (Dew et al., 2015). However, little research has mentioned the role of culture in this process as entrepreneurs must adapt to some form of culture when joining a network. Scholars have also studied the role of culture during opportunity recognition. For example, Ma et al. (2011) focused on individualism/collectivism as a central cultural factor in connection with the use of social networks by individuals in order to examine the potential role of culture as a critical layer of environmental context that affects the recognition of opportunities during immigrant entrepreneurship. However, their limited use of the two individualist and collectivist cultures tested in an ego-centred network reduces the understanding of the full potential impact of unobserved economic

and political differences on opportunity recognition. In other words, cross-cultural research should employ broader cultural contexts and cognitive measures, as suggested by Shenkar (2001), to acquire further explanations. Based on this, Zahra et al. (2005) reviewed cognition and international entrepreneurship. The authors suggested that scholars need to study the effects of national and international institutional environments such as culture and systems of innovation during entrepreneurial opportunity recognition that shape an entrepreneur's decision to employ a cross-border strategy. McKendrick (2001) suggests nationality and all its cultural riches and shortcomings may decide a firm's global strategy. Studies such as these highlight the need to study the role of the home-country and host-country cultures in shaping the mind of the entrepreneurs during opportunity recognition.

2.2.4 Opportunity Evaluation

Much research on entrepreneurship has focused on opportunity recognition. Surprisingly, little research has explored how entrepreneurs evaluate potential opportunities (Choi & Shepherd, 2004). Evaluation involves entrepreneurs assessing the viability and future potential of ideas, or sets of ideas (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2010). Scholars have introduced an intentionality-based view upon the emergence of opportunity, viewing opportunity evaluation as a result of the intentions to act entrepreneurially under the perceptions of desirability and feasibility on opportunities (Krueger, 1993; 2000; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). However, as evaluation covers distinct processes within the chain of information processing that translate desires and goals into behaviour (Haggard, 2005), scholars later

became more involved with work on the evaluation based on recognised opportunities with regard to action during the entrepreneurial process (Wood et al., 2012), as in the stages of opportunity recognition moving into opportunity evaluation (Shane, 2003). The former view on evaluation highlights the critical role of actions making evaluation meaningful, whereas the latter sees evaluation based on a more cognitive processing phenomenon transitioned from opportunity recognition.

Research has investigated cognitive factors influencing opportunity evaluation, mostly together with opportunity recognition, e.g., expert scripts that distinguish serial entrepreneurs from novice entrepreneurs (Mitchell et al., 2000), cognitive short-cuts and heuristics during decision-making (Mitchell et al., 2004), self-regulation processes in the use of cognitive heuristics (Bryant, 2007), and the problematic issues featuring confirmatory bias such as the illusion of control, inappropriate belief caused by small numbers, overconfidence, and planning fallacy (Keh et al., 2002). Within this stream of research, there has been little distinction between the cognitive factors that dominantly affect evaluation rather than recognition. In other words, there is a fine line between the way in which cognitive short-cuts are used to recognise opportunity and to evaluate it. Although a cognition focus advances our understanding of how entrepreneurs evaluate evolving business opportunities as they transition from opportunity recognition towards implementation (Keh et al., 2002; West, 2007), the question here is whether or not the entrepreneur simply moves recognition of the opportunity to implementation through evaluation or, at times, skips the stage of evaluation prior to the intention to act.

An early work on opportunity evaluation by Hastie (2001) suggested that desires and beliefs (personal values, goals, knowledge and means) are combined with choosing a course of action. The role of action, thus, was inherent in research such as this, asserting the importance of taking action. However, it is not possible to discount the role of cognitive processing, either. Several other studies during this time also show interest in the cognitive structure of opportunity evaluation. McMullen and Shepherd (2006) distinguished third-person entrepreneurial opportunities from first-person entrepreneurial opportunities, understood as 'an opportunity for someone' vs 'an opportunity for me'. In this article, the authors suggested that, when evaluating an entrepreneurial opportunity's feasibility, an entrepreneur's judgement often extends beyond beliefs to actions, pointing at earlier work by Hastie (2001) and Baron (1998, 2000). The authors advocated the existence of cognitive errors on entrepreneurs' decisions due to internal cognitive structures. Here, several cognitive mechanisms and thinking errors may impact entrepreneurs' thinking. Dimov (2007a, p.561) emphasised the importance of both 'thinking' and 'acting' during evaluation, using creativity and insight gained from the action, which plays an essential role in the decision to move to exploit the opportunity. More recently, Foo et al. (2005) examined emotions that influence intentions, and through these intentions, reinforce the entrepreneur's feelings about their ventures during the evaluation, highlighting the complex effects in the feedback loops among emotions, cognition, and intentions and actions. As noted by Ellsworth and Scherer (2003, p.572), 'thinking and feelings are inextricably linked most of the time', and it may be challenging to separate thought about the opportunity from the feeling of its feasibility. Research has even found that environmental feedback can also be misinterpreted as a result of

cognitive bias, where positive outcomes are attributed to the actions of the entrepreneur and adverse outcomes to external factors beyond their control, pointing to a more dominant factor during evaluation (Baron 1998; Busenitz & Barney 1997). Little research, however, has explained why both aspects of thinking and acting are required during opportunity evaluation.

In this thesis, an attempt is made to identify intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence cognitive and behavioural aspects of an entrepreneur during evaluation. It is assumed that evaluation will not start until an opportunity is put into operation through recognition of a fruitful idea, but it will also not be made possible without action. This argument, on the one hand, refers to the mixed cognitive and behavioural processing by the entrepreneur during opportunity evaluation, while, on the other hand, asserts the opportunity development perspective during evaluation. To this end, this thesis suggests that culture is capable of largely governing the mixed cognitive and behavioural processing during evaluation and is worth investigating.

2.2.5 Opportunity Implementation

All the studies reviewed so far, however, suffer from minimal elaboration on the mechanisms required to move from idea to the decision to exploit in the entrepreneurial process (Choi & Shepherd, 2004; Dimov, 2010). Wood et al. (2012, p.208) defined entrepreneurial action as ‘efforts by individuals to identify, develop and/or pursue ideas for introducing new products, services and/or business models in particular markets’. As the entrepreneur makes such attempts, they move through the stages of opportunity

recognition and opportunity evaluation by transitioning from one form of cognitive processing to another. The implementation of opportunities requires substantial time and effort (Levesque & Minniti, 2006). Entrepreneurs who possess significant relevant knowledge may spend a relatively small amount of time evaluating opportunities before they start exploiting, but this does not mean that the entrepreneur is free from factors such as confirmatory bias. Other entrepreneurs may spend a more considerable amount of time on opportunity evaluation and delay the implementation process, thus allowing their minds to remain open for the recognition and evaluation of more opportunities. Scholars have also attempted to identify the time when entrepreneurs should begin implementation using creative approaches such as optimal-stopping (Choi et al., 2008). This research indicates explicitly that it is most common for entrepreneurs to move into implementation when their ignorance has been reduced, and their knowledge has been sufficiently increased, highlighting the trade-off between the time spent considering the idea's legitimacy and taking immediate action to avoid unnecessary competition in the future. The role of uncertainty is highlighted as the entrepreneur moves over to the stage of opportunity implementation since they have to engage in the acquisition of resources required for the implementation (Shane, 2003).

During implementation, entrepreneurs invest resources based on their expectations of future consumer demands and market conditions, which are inherently subjective under dynamic environments with limited resources and information (Bhide, 2000; Klein, 2008). To effectively make decisions under such conditions of stress and uncertainty, entrepreneurs need to be competent in the cognitive aspects of decision-making under

the same conditions (Casson, 1997; Mitchell et al., 2000; Simon et al., 2000), especially in their use of heuristics (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001) and cognitive capacity to make risky decisions (Busenitz, 1999). In addition to cognitive capabilities that allow the entrepreneurs to deal with uncertainty, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which involves individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities for achieving success and controlling cognition to cope with challenging goals during the business start-up process, has been proven to significantly influence their chances of taking action during implementation (Drnovšek et al., 2010). Entrepreneurship literature has categorised three (3) types of self-efficacy that are relevant to entrepreneurial implementation: self-efficacy of business start-up or growth, task or outcome goals, and the valence of the beliefs (positive or negative control beliefs). As a task-specific construct, this categorisation allows research to consider both the assessment of the entrepreneur's confident internal beliefs and external (environment) constraints and possibilities, indicating its close relationship with action and action intentionality (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994).

Aspects related to cognitive processing such as accumulated knowledge, cognitive capabilities, and self-efficacy are highlighted during opportunity implementation to allow this study to explore the entrepreneurial process that is iterative and involves the interactions between the entrepreneurial actors and their environment. These key factors that are prominent during the implementation stage enable this study to reflect on the 'cognitive inflexion point' (Wood et al., 2012), which allows a non-linear development of entrepreneurial opportunity over time, contributing to addressing the significant question

as to how the entrepreneur transitions through EI, opportunity recognition, evaluation, and implementation.

2.2.6 Closing thoughts on the four entrepreneurial stages, opportunity and research gap

The process of opportunity recognition is argued to be central to entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Here, value is created through '*the nexus of entrepreneurial opportunities and enterprising individuals […] where a situation in which a person can create a new means-ends framework for recombining resources that the entrepreneur believes will yield a profit*' (Shane, 2003, p.18). Shane's three-stage model of the entrepreneurial process of opportunity discovery, implementation, and execution strategically integrate the moderating effects of the environment (industry and macro-environment) and the individual (psychological and demographic individual factors), or the means-ends framework through which the belief in value creation emerges alongside the movement of the entrepreneur across the stages. This thesis also considers the stage of entrepreneurial intention prior to the three stages proposed by Shane (2003), considering the importance of action during this process. While the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship as a process is popular in the literature, there has been minimal explanation of how the 'means-ends framework' is created in order to illustrate the entrepreneurs transitioning between stages (Casson, 2005) leading to a call for a process-oriented approach to entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

When assessing the term 'opportunity', the concept faces a number of critiques due to the lack of definitional precision and theoretical clarity (Woods, 2017), leading to some

scholars even calling for it to be dissected into components (Foss & Klein, 2012; Klein, 2008). These reactions suggest a tendency amongst entrepreneurship researchers to avoid dealing with the complexity surrounding the construct of opportunity. Davidsson (2015) demonstrates that there has been limited progress on the theoretical and empirical aspects of the role of 'opportunities' and their interaction with actors (the 'nexus') as described by Shane and Venkataraman (2000). Davidsson (2015) proposes a fundamental reconceptualisation using three constructs to capture the 'opportunity'. These are external enablers (aggregate-level circumstances such as regulatory changes, technological breakthroughs, and demographic shifts); new venture ideas (imaginary combinations of product/service offerings, markets, and the means of bringing these offerings into existence); and opportunity confidence (an actor's subjective evaluation of the attractiveness of the external enablers and new venture ideas).

Opportunity confidence changes as the faith that the entrepreneur has in their business changes (up or down). Similarly, the characteristics of the idea, such as the level of novelty and market size, change in accordance with the idea variation. Also, external circumstances allow external enablers to exist, changing when new situations are introduced into the environment. However, no matter how hard entrepreneurship scholars try to improve the 'opportunity' construct clarity by dismantling it into multiple variables that are easier to capture, one major drawback of this approach is that it seems to overlook what entrepreneurship is about. For example, an entrepreneur who operates in a supportive environment (external enablers, e.g., long traditioned family business), having high confidence (individual confidence, i.e., from being familiarised with the business) about an excellent idea (venture idea), may choose not to act upon it, leading

to no opportunity being realised. Thus, Gartner et al. (2003, p.144) suggested that 'without action, there is no insight' into the opportunity. Immigrant entrepreneurs, as opposed to other types of entrepreneurs, may be more eager to act upon an opportunity under the view of 'necessity' entrepreneurship when faced with a lack of income for survival in a foreign country and the difficulty integrating into the mainstream society (Chrysostome & Lin, 2010). In the case of immigrant entrepreneurship, there exists a strong intention amongst immigrants to survive economically and socially adapt to the new, unfamiliar environment and business settings.

Given that the importance of the context and uncertainty emerged from the external environment (social, political, or economic, institutions) during the entrepreneurial process (or immigrant entrepreneurship process), the answer to how uncertainty immensely affects cognition and actions remains loosely explained in the literature. Although a simple search on Google Scholar using the keywords 'entrepreneurship + uncertainty' results in approximately 143,000 scholarly works, controversy still exists due to a lack of coherence in types and nature data (Bloom, 2014). For example, institutional context can affect entrepreneurial decision-making during both opportunity discovery and creation. This outcome is because, without institutions with a high focus on supporting their people (e.g., Mehlum et al., 2006), a 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 1934) representing creation opportunity can become unproductive or even truly destructive, inhibiting economic growth and performance (Baumol, 1990; Stenholm et al., 2013). Alternatively, entrepreneurship can also be explicitly directed towards the formal institutional setting itself, thus changing the 'rules of the game' (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Shepsle, 1989). New vignettes of institution have been proposed, such as informal rules,

stability, and rational action, while behaviour based on norms has a significant impact on the type of entrepreneur (Lownpes, 1996). Entrepreneurial action and institutions thus profoundly influence each other in different ways (Mutch, 2007; Sewell, 1992), although this link can be ambiguous (Douhan & Henrekson, 2010).

Common problems faced by a group of people can create common cultural cognitions consisting of a limited number of ways to respond to an event (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). Entrepreneurs draw upon knowledge structure or scripts to act during the entrepreneurial process in which some are well developed in the form of an expert script, while others are not as fully developed and considered as novice script (Glaser, 1984). Despite the level of scripts acquired by the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial cognitions, such as arrangements, willingness, and ability, will be similar across cultures, as confirmed by Mitchell et al. (2002). In addition, although this research has moved away from their earlier project (Mitchell et al., 2000) focusing on culture-based groups of countries, the theoretical implications of this study are impeded mainly by the early development of measure and theory. Interestingly, studies such as these pave the way for further interpretation and detailed examinations of the impact of cultures at the national and sub-scale levels of the entrepreneur's decision-making. In the context of immigrant entrepreneurship, the home and host country cultures remain the least explored, and this gap leads this thesis to explore the impact of the home-country culture on decision-making at each stage of the entrepreneurial process, illustrated through actions implemented.

The gap in this research is identified based on the argument that viewing entrepreneurship through the four stages of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation shows limitation as we do not understand how individuals make sense of such opportunity, especially under the influence of culture. Entrepreneurship research has not clearly identified whether opportunity is created or discovered with the wording used interchangeably in the literature as being 'identified', 'constructed', and 'discovered'. During opportunity recognition, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs have been found to use a trial-and-error type of information processing for sensemaking to recognise opportunity (Vaghely and Julien, 2008). Similarly, Hoyte et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of sensemaking during opportunity ideation towards opportunity recognition. Although there is a limited amount of research on sensemaking during opportunity evaluation and implementation, Niell et al. (2017) concurred with the conception that opportunity can be both discovered and created and suggested that entrepreneurs rely on archived information and prior experience, as well as problem-solving to make sense of opportunity and switch between these two modes of thinking. This line of argument encourages this thesis to investigate sensemaking across the four stages of the entrepreneurial process. This thesis has suggested that the aspects of taking action (behaviour) are more critical when viewing entrepreneurship as a creation process; whereas, when considering entrepreneurship as a discovery effort, the cognition needs to be studied in more detail. During the four stages of the entrepreneurial process, the stages of EI and recognition draw more on the entrepreneur’s cognitive ability to develop an idea into the perceptions of a fruitful opportunity. During the evaluation, however, both cognitive and behavioural aspects are

required to evaluate an opportunity effectively. When in implementation, more behaviour is required. Both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are argued to influence all these four phases, and it is expected that, during all the stages, there is an intrinsic/extrinsic dimension that is capable of influencing both cognition and the behaviour of the entrepreneur such as culture or cultural value.

2.3 Part III: Sensemaking and Confirmatory Bias Perspectives

2.3.1 A Sensemaking Epistemology

In order to create or discover an opportunity, entrepreneurs use their prior experience to scan and search for evolving opportunities (Fiet, 2002; Kirzner, 1997). The search efforts can be comparable to the episodes in a learning cycle through which cognitive heuristics and scripts (structures) are formed (Kolb, 1995). Specifically, the scan or search can be deliberate or accidental, and it leads to the development of cognitive structures serving the pursuit of entrepreneurship (Breslin, 2017). Scholars often call these structures in the mind of entrepreneurs the 'entrepreneurial mind', while its interaction with the world that the entrepreneurs perceive to be exogenous is often studied in the literature (Baron, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2002). Here, cognitive processes can be understood as a machine that allows different ingredients (cognitive structures) to be mixed and turned into a new workable product (opportunity discovery or creation) (Kaish & Gilad, 1991; Shaver & Scott, 1991). Now, if we return to the concept of alertness that we discussed earlier in this thesis, not only does the information have to be presented in the right place and at the

right time but also the entrepreneurs must possess the unique insights to be able to 'connect the dots' (Baron, 2006) and make the available information (or these knowledge structures) workable. This stage is usually followed by an evaluation where entrepreneurs assess the viability and potential of ideas or sets of ideas (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2010). Many authors have suggested that discovery is made possible through a series of experiential learning throughout the entrepreneurial journey. An entrepreneur can at first discover abstract ideas, but they need to be made workable through multiple testing and evaluation efforts (Breslin, 2007; Kolb, 1995).

Generally, an individual seeks to form a belief about the potential of an idea prior to the conceptualisation of opportunities, while they perceive the source of new beliefs to be exogenous or endogenous (Alvarez et al., 2013). In either case, when conceptualising a solution to such a belief, the individual engages in the sensemaking process that evolves through the interaction between the individual and external environment (Weick, 1979; Weick et al., 2005). This research integrates Campbell's application of evolutionary epistemology to social life (1965; 1997). The stages include enactment (or also 'variation'), selection, and retention. The research proposes that 'sensemaking can be treated as reciprocal exchanges between actors [Enactment] and their environments [Ecological Change], which provide system variation, which are subsequently made meaningful [Selection] and preserved [Retention]' (Weick et al., 2005, p.409). This provides the evolutionary dynamic described by some in terms of variation-selection-retention, or VSR (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006; Breslin, 2011; Breslin & Jones, 2012). Specifically, enactment refers to individuals' perceptions of emerging belief.

Individuals become aware of signals that deviate from those considered as 'normal' environmental cues and place a higher focus on them (Weick, 1979). Here, it is essential to highlight that the more uncertainty that the signals carry, the more likely that the entrepreneurs will start the sensemaking. This stage emphasises the role of environmental changes in our research. This noticing and bracketing stage, which is the inceptive stage in sensemaking, directs individuals to the stage of Selection. The second stage in sensemaking involves interpretation of meanings of events. Here, unlike in enactment, where individuals only make sense and invent new meanings of events, they start to assign a name to those that have occurred during the organising process using prior knowledge with consideration of environmental conditions (Weick et al., 2005). Finally, retention preserves the interpreted meanings of these occurrences mentioned above and, subsequently, informs the behaviour of individuals. The preservation of belief is important and reaffirms the need to include individual belief in the study; this encourages the individual to take behavioural actions to move across time and space, until the moment when the individual finds that they no longer fit with their cognitive frameworks that seemingly define acceptability and plausibility (explained as the considerable disparity in the preserved belief and ongoing events in Weick et al., 2005). This divergence leads the entrepreneur to reassess the belief in light of new information acquired through past behavioural effort and brings the entrepreneur back to the first stage of enactment; in other words, it takes some time and behavioural effort to loop back, which aligns with the time construct in this research. Changes in beliefs that occur in the conceptualisation of opportunities are both consciously and unconsciously

adapted into ongoing behaviours through this repetitive VSR over time (Baum, 1988; Weick, 1979; Miner, 1994).

2.3.2 Confirmatory Bias and Bounded Rationality

It is worth noting that sensemaking often takes place on a society or community level, as opposed to an individual one. The literature on sensemaking has argued that individual sensemaking of information (in an isolated way) is not common but instead has arisen by interacting with people around them, or from 'idiosyncratic and/or communal interpretations' (Drazin et al., 1999). Weick (1995) also proposed that sensemaking as a pursuit of mutual understanding is particularly prevalent amongst people sharing the same culture (Cardon et al., 2011). This is because people within a community, e.g., the ethnic immigrant diaspora, who share the same tendency to interpret an event based on their standard group schemas or scripts from their home country, are more likely to engage in the unconscious processing of information leading to behaviour that assumes others can comprehend, redress and construct the same meaning.

In environmental dynamics such as the immigrant communities in affluent countries, sensemaking activities become even more critical due to a significant extension of equivocal and ambiguous information (Wagner & Gooding, 1997). The entrepreneur often scans the foreign environment for information that fits their cognitive schemas or scripts and subsequently assigns a meaning to it based on what they already know, and proceed with behaving towards their understanding of a productive outcome of the course of action (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). During this stage, the interpretation is dependent on

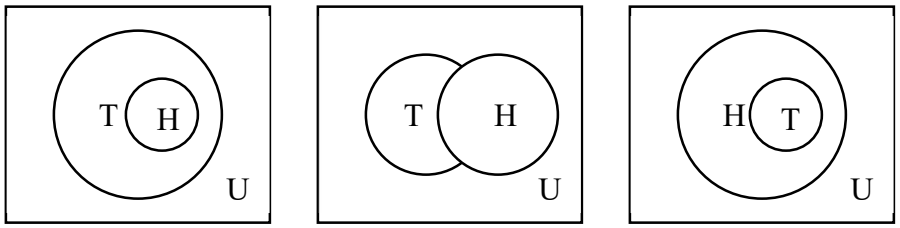
how the situations are understood, which leads to the mobilisation of action in some direction (Haukedal, 1994). This argument highlights the importance of the way in which immigrant entrepreneurs interpret ambiguous information, especially when faced with challenges such as choosing to become an entrepreneur or working for someone else in an unfamiliar context setting (Cheng & Ven, 1996). Ambiguous cues are a focus influencing the outcome of a decision for immigrant entrepreneurs, rather than what they are already accustomed to, based on their understanding of the same context.

Arguments in this section are grounded in the concept of bounded rationality, recognising that individuals from the same community often engage in limited information gathering in order to reduce cognitive effort, especially where uncertainty is high, and information is sparse, such as entrepreneurship when working with each other (March, 1978; Simon, 1947; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Individuals do not always engage in extensive information gathering and processing to identify optimal choices or decide on the basis of effort-preserving but sometimes fallible cognitive heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This view reflects an individual's inherent tendency to preserve energy (i.e., 'cognitively lazy'), or that such economising may be a rational reaction by individuals facing an overwhelming number of decisions, which is common amongst entrepreneurs (Hallen & Pahnke, 2016; Simon, 1955; Taylor, 1981). While cognitive activities triggered by environmental cues and their subsequent behaviour are the main focus in sensemaking, confirmatory bias more directly emphasises an individual's tendency to keep the cognitive outcomes in a certain direction. Several studies advocate that entrepreneurs and managers reject signals that falsify their pre-existing assumptions

while searching for information (Gavetti & Rivkin, 2005; Kunda, 1987). Initiated by Wason (1960), such a phenomenon is labelled 'confirmatory bias' in psychology literature, where some outcome is said to occur or is known to have occurred, constraining the direction of the test results (Peterson & Wong-On-Wing, 2000). The effect may be explained in many different ways, one of which is that individual knowledge shapes the direction of thinking. A cognitive heuristic allows (1) readily available (either complete or incomplete) knowledge and (2) recent knowledge to dominate the decision-making or thoughts of the individual rather than other alternatives or procedures (Schwarz et al., 1991; Schwarz & Vaughn, 2002; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Two aspects of this availability heuristic are emphasised: familiarity and currency, and people tend to pay attention to environmental cues that are either familiar with or recent to their knowledge. Fitting neatly into the concept of sensemaking and entrepreneurship, the literature on confirmatory bias not only suggests that entrepreneurs form hypotheses about opportunities and seek evidence to test the veracity of their conjectures, as in the sensemaking approach (Shepherd et al., 2012), but this process also advocates the iterative entrepreneurial process by demonstrating the revision of hypotheses being undertaken in light of discovered inadequacy (Klayman & Ha, 1989).

These mechanisms suggest that individuals evaluating an opportunity may further deviate from the process described by cognitive entrepreneurship research. In particular, bounded rationality suggests that individuals will primarily attend to highly accessible information (Kahneman, 2011) and less cognitively demanding information to evaluate correlations (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Individuals may, therefore, often rely on simplifying societal and cultural heuristics that yield approximate, though often systematically

biased, inferences (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Entrepreneurship scholars have raised their concerns over confirmatory bias in the process of opportunity recognition. Existing research presents problematic effects caused by confirmatory bias that increases the chance of employing cognitive heuristics in decision-making leading to overconfidence, illusion of control and misguided belief in the law of small numbers (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001; Bryant, 2007; McGrath, 1999; Mitchell et al., 2000; Simon et al., 2000; or see Shepherd et. al., 2015 for a review). Klayman and Ha (1989) suggested three possible relations between hypothesis and correct rule, which are adapted to the entrepreneurship context as shown in *Figure 2.3.1*. The rule can be referred to as the opportunity in the entrepreneurship context in this research.



A. Embedded Hypothesis B. Overlapping Hypothesis C. Surrounding Hypothesis

Figure 2.3.1: Three possible relations between hypothesis and fruitful opportunities

Notes: U represents the universe of feasible opportunities;

H represents the set of opportunities identified by the hypothesis;

T represents the set of target opportunities, that is, those fitting the correct rule.

For example, nascent entrepreneurs are likely to fit within the case of the embedded hypothesis due to their inexperience in entrepreneurship (Shepherd et al., 2012). Their hypotheses often fit inside the set of target opportunities provided by the changes in the external environment. In such a situation, students are more prone to respond quickly

(time impact) to environmental cues that fit their hypothesis. In fact, those individuals with a tendency to use a +H test are more confident in refusing to perform a test outside of their current hypothesis; as a result, they may quickly identify reasons for performing entrepreneurial behaviour with the emerging environmental cues. Bounded rationality focuses on the conservation of gathering and processing information by individuals, and this can also result in some individuals thinking carefully about what constitutes reliable information and to diligently search for such information (Kahneman, 2011; Simon, 1947).

2.3.3 Properties of Sensemaking and Confirmatory Bias

Weick (1988, p.310) noted, using the case of the Union Carbide gas leak that occurred in the Indian state of Bhopal in 1984, that, 'When people make a public commitment that an operating gauge is inoperative, the last thing they will consider during a crisis is that the gauge is operating. Had they not made the commitment, the blind spot would not be so persistent.'

Identity construction contributes to the perceptions of commitment and preoccupies sensemaking. Weick (1995, p.22) described identity as the maintenance of 'esteem and consistency of one's self-conceptions'. It is worth noting that a single sensemaker (an individual) acts in accordance with their surroundings, which is described by Knorr-Cetina (1981) as a 'typified discursive construction'. Weick (1995) described three factors that affect a person's changing sense of self: the need for self-enhancement with a positive cognitive and affective state; the self-efficacy motive to perceive oneself as competent

and efficacious; and the need for self-consistency that promotes sensing a phenomenon with continuous experience. Weick (1995) also emphasised that an individual also takes into account the cues for their identity from the view of others, how they believe people around them see the world, and the conduct of others to influence their own behaviour to sense a phenomenon. The three needs mentioned above push individuals to seek cues from the conduct of others to confirm their values and sense of self. This contributes to highlighting the role of space or culture in influencing individuals during sensemaking.

Alongside a consideration of the changes in space, retrospective sensemaking is derived from Schutz's (1967; cf Weick, 1995, p.24) analysis of 'meaningful lived experiences', referring to the fact that people only become fully aware of the reality after they have engaged in some action, and that it is, however close, in reality, a past world (Hartshorne, 1962; Weick, 1995). Pirsig (1974, p.247) once said: 'reality is always the moment of vision before the intellectualisation takes place, and there is no other reality'. Early 20th-century cultural anthropologist George Herbert Mead (1956; cf Weick, 1995) stated that, through our motor and sensory processes, there are always lagged periods between our action and cognition, with action taking place before our sensory system can recognise it. Individual sensemaking is an activity that involves the process of synthesising multiple possible meanings leading to an overload of information and confusion. As a result, it may urge a person to ignore particular meanings or (unimportant or important) information (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Schutz and Hernes (2013) highlighted the role of time in retrospective sensemaking, which exists in two forms: discrete segments and pure direction. Weick (1995, p.25) implied that time is discrete when a person

retrospectively makes sense of situations, and sensemaking is discarded to our memories and cognitive structures. Time is also fluid and continuous (pure duration) in that when a person reacts, they tend not to notice the reactions again immediately. And, if the individual relies on their historic memories, they will not be able to fully capture all the environmental cues that lead to distortion of information and, subsequently, make a decision under information asymmetry.

Weick (1988, p.305) noted 'there is a delicate trade-off between dangerous action which produces understanding and safe inaction which produces confusion'. The concept of enactment underpins this statement as individuals generate the environment through their actions and through their attempts to make sense of these actions (Smircich & Stubbart, 1985). Cognition and action are connected using sensemaking (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), and earlier research also implied behaviours that emerged from their past activities are essential in the sensemaking process (Follett, 1924). It is, therefore, not surprising that Weick (1995, p.31) stated that individuals are creators of their own environment, including both the materials that they have to cope with and the opportunities that they face. However, Blumer (1998) argued that individuals might delay, redirect, and inhibit multiple actions. The line of actions remains in multiple brackets of discrete-time periods (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Weick (1995, p.35) suggested that people not only can discover their own intentions, but also the intentions of others. Steward (1981) argued that individuals might engage in convergent interpretation (role-taking) that allows them to be in the position of the other. Using their own perceived relative social location, individuals may imagine and anticipate the responses of others

associated with them over their ongoing interactions with the world (Hewitt, 1979; Turner, 1962). Literature shows that pause and delay may either induce positive effects (Strike & Rerup, 2015) or lead to detachment with some improvement in decision-making (Rudolph et al., 2009). Alternatively, it is essential to note that decision-making may not necessarily occur with the knowledge that the decisions are likely to be understood and implemented by others. They instead depend on the decision-makers, having taken into account the physical presence of others – or, in some cases, only the imagination of their existence (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Past work has paid limited attention to context (Whiteman & Cooper, 2011) and sensemaking is mostly a theory of local practice (Weber & Glynn, 2006). Blumer (1969) implied that shared values and shared meanings such as cultural values work as the glue that sticks people together in society, and conflicts in value are also of importance. Ting-Toomey (1982) argued that conflicts offer society an opportunity to re-establish the status quo. In this way, the social and cultural values become paramount for sensemakers, as it is through such conflicts that people start to engage in a process such as sensemaking to re-assign meanings to a recent occurrence.

Given the likelihood of retrospective sensemaking and delayed actions, ongoing cues may subconsciously be ignored. For this reason, Weick (1995, p.43) noted that people do not tend to focus on themselves unless they focus on the past and start to know it. Since time exists in two forms of pure duration and discrete segments, in effect sensemaking never starts or stops; and understanding sensemaking requires the understanding of how individuals 'chop moments out of continuous flows and extract cues from those moments' (Weick, 1995, p.43). If one ever stops to attempt sensemaking, action must be

initiated. Such a situation induces multiple anticipatory and adaptive responses that permit attitudinal and contextual variables (i.e., various sources of confirmatory bias) to influence the process of coping with the stimulus, using their values of the self (individual beliefs) as well as knowledge.

2.3.4 The Opportunity Development Framework: A sensemaking perspective

In this section, the application of sensemaking and the confirmatory bias (SCB) approach is illustrated through the merits of an SCB approach to the entrepreneurial process, depicting how it unfolds over time by moving across the stages initiated by perception of an ideal opportunity culmination.

We may be surprised at how often we engage in making sense of the world around us through interactions with multiple entities and create new meanings of them. The SCB approach is, therefore, deemed appropriate for examining the entrepreneurial process since it focuses on ways in which individuals or organisational actors, when confronted with ambiguity or uncertainty, 'seek to clarify what is going on by extracting and interpreting cues from the environment' (Maitlis & Christianson 2014, p.58). Watson (2009) suggests studying entrepreneurial action from broader cultural contexts. A qualitative approach is appropriate since it allows this study to explore the thickness of experience descriptions while noting existing theoretical views and their limitations, enabling the capturing of new theoretical ideas and insights (Eisenhardt, 1989).

A study adopting an SCB approach is also timely because there are few in-depth studies concerned with the everyday practices and routines of starting new businesses (Mueller et al., 2012), especially how entrepreneurs respond to the risks and uncertainties associated with opportunity development (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). Selden and Fletcher (2015) conceptualised the 'entrepreneurial journey', through the view of complexity science (Lichtenstein, 2011; McKelvey, 2004), as consisting of a number of transition points linking entrepreneurial sensemaking to specific artefacts including business ideas and business models, or overall entrepreneurial opportunity. Recent research suggests that opportunities are what entrepreneurs retrieve rather than see, which is a form of 'retrospective sensemaking that follows action' (Carter et al., 2003, p.109).

Much research in the literature has employed information-processing theories and human capital (Wood et al., 2012) and process models of venture creation (Bhave, 1994). Although these approaches have allowed researchers to capture the process nature of entrepreneurship, none have deliberately attempted to place a strong focus on the iterative nature of opportunity recognition, evaluation and implementation over time. Since this research has suggested that opportunity 'peak ends' can arise at any stage during the entrepreneurial process, the SCB approach offers a unique view on the entrepreneur so that scholars appreciate the cognitive capacities to make sense of multiple environmental cues and cope with biases as well as errors, which can distinguish between two entrepreneurs under the same context.

This thesis is particularly interested in studying the Vietnamese neo-Confucian values and their effects on each stage of the entrepreneurial process, aiming to address the gap in the literature regarding the lack of an understanding of how one cultural value can be more influential compared to another on a particular stage of the entrepreneurial process.

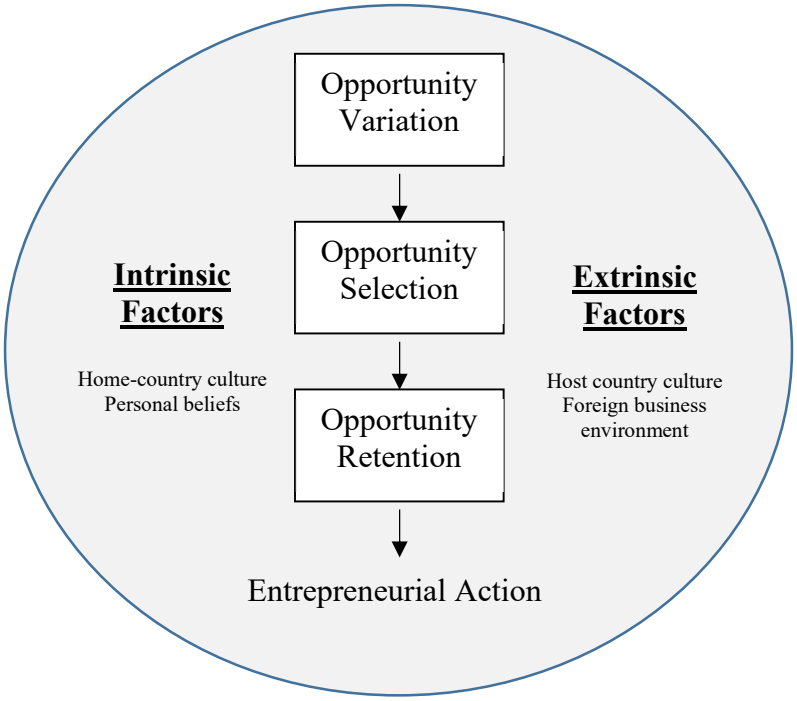


Figure 2.3.2: Opportunity Development: A sensemaking perspective (Author's Own)

2.3.5 Cultural influences on sensemaking process

Despite past studies calling for consideration of opportunity as the outcome of the enactment of the external environment, and of sensemaking processes (Zott and Huy, 2007; Witt 2007), research in entrepreneurship has overlooked the role of culture during

sensemaking of opportunity. Much research on sensemaking of culture in entrepreneurship focuses on the failure of entrepreneurs and how they bounce back from it instead of examining sensemaking across the stages.

Notable research by Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) investigated culture and entrepreneurship. However, the authors of this research only considered the concept of cultural entrepreneurship. Here, cultural entrepreneurship is defined as 'the process of storytelling that mediates between extant stocks of entrepreneurial resources and subsequent capital acquisition and wealth creation' with culture being viewed as ‘an interpretive framework through which individuals make sense of their own behavior, as well as the behavior of collectivities in their society'. Cardon, Stevens & Potter (2011) employed a sensemaking perspective to investigate the views of venture failure events amongst US subcultures. On the one hand, this study found a significant impact on how entrepreneurs view themselves following failure and stigmatisation. On the other hand, it suggests that cultural sensemaking of failure varies by geographical area and subcultures. The authors, through this study, highlighted the importance of the institutional contexts within which sensemaking takes place. They also argued that sensemaking takes place more often at the community or social level, which includes the formal and informal rules that affect the entrepreneur (Lee et al., 2007).

Using a similar method to Cardon, Stevens & Potter (2011), Nicholson and Anderson (2005) examined sensemaking of entrepreneurial phenomena through building blocks of communication, myth, and metaphor presented in a major non-political British middle

range broadsheet newspaper. These authors argued that there are inherent issues with the description and definition of entrepreneurship and suggested sensemaking as a critical perspective to find out how cultures are produced and reproduced within the media. In the same vein, inspired by the work of Cardon, Stevens and Potter (2011), Heinze (2014) further expanded research on entrepreneurial failure which often focuses on the actual learning process by investigating a phenomenological hermeneutical view of the lived experience of failure, taking into consideration impacts from the entrepreneur's social environment. Long-term emotions and feelings of confusion as crucial elements of sensemaking can be a source of sensemaking failure, especially under the influence of culture. Another study that employed a similar research methodology to this thesis is Cope (2011), providing an interpretative phenomenological analysis of entrepreneurial learning from failure, proposing recovery and re-emergence as a function of distinctive learning processes that foster a range of higher-level learning. There is little research in the sensemaking of culture during entrepreneurship that focuses on making a distinction between opportunity creation and opportunity discovery, in which entrepreneurs make sense of such opportunity at different stages of the entrepreneurial process. One of the exceptions is research relating to the role of entrepreneurial sensemaking in SME marketing (i.e., Bettiol, Maria and Finotto, 2012) in which sensemaking is found to foster marketing strategies, stimulate communication content and direct marketing activities and levers during opportunity implementation. The major problem with studies such as this is that it is unclear whether the authors assume opportunity to be created or discovered. However, such ignorance shows flexibility in

applying sensemaking across the conceptualisation of opportunity, especially to the stage view of entrepreneurship.

2.4 Part IV: Culture and Entrepreneurship

2.4.1 The Cognitive Processing of Culture

Culture is defined as 'a set of shared values, beliefs, and expected behaviours that is deeply embedded and unconscious' (Herbig, 1994; Hofstede, 1980), that rationally or irrationally shapes political institutions as well as social and technical systems (Hayton et al., 2002). Past research suggests studying entrepreneurship under a cultural umbrella because an entrepreneur's personalities and behaviours are intertwined with the national culture from which they originate (Berger, 1991; Lee & Peterson, 2001). Research on culture in entrepreneurship asserts that common cultural values and beliefs which represent the shared ideals and long-term goals of societies determine the level of entrepreneurship in a society (Davidsson & Wiklund, 1997; Hayton et al., 2002; Krueger et al., 2013). A society with an entrepreneurial culture exhibits an environment that encourages entrepreneurial activities (Johanisson, 1984).

Current literature on entrepreneurship and its allied fields such as international business and cross-cultural management suffers from a dominance of overlooked measures of culture at the national level, i.e., Hofstede (1980), Kogut and Singh (1988), and the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004). These mean-based measures of national culture (or cultural

distance) have not reached a workable solution (Shenkar, 2001; Terjesen et al., 2016; Tung & Verbeke, 2010) as variations inevitably exist both within and across cultures and influence the intentions to start a new venture (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015; Drori et al., 2009; Lee, 1995; Lieske,1993; Mitchell et al., 2000). Accordingly, Terjesen et al. (2016) suggested that national culture has a scant role in determining firm internationalisation; and individual entrepreneur features, such as international knowledge and experience (Terjesen & Elam, 2009), personal/business networks (Gassmann & Keupp, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Loane & Bell, 2006), and global vision (Johnson, 2004) are more correlated with this decision. Two cultural dimensions that are commonly studied in entrepreneurship literature are collectivism/individualism and uncertainty avoidance (Hayton et al., 2002; Mueller & Thomas, 2001; Noseleit, 2010). Only little research (e.g., Baack et. al., 2015; Dow, 2008; Håkanson & Ambos, 2010; Sousa & Bradley, 2006; Williams & Gregoire, 2015) has been dedicated to examining the factors and processes through which decision-makers make perceptions of culture at the individual level, referring to them as psychic distance (SD). However, current research claims that cultural values are shared ideals abstracted from specific behaviours and may influence them only indirectly (Frese, 2015; House et al., 2014; Stephan & Uhlaner, 2010).

While there is increasing contact and interaction among individuals from different cultures (Berry, 2001; Hayton & Cacciotti, 2013), the mixed findings – support and opposition on the role of cultural values in entrepreneurship (e.g., Hayton et al., 2002) – highlighted that we can be less confident of the existence of a single entrepreneurial culture. For example, Sawang et al. (2006) conducted a study on occupational stress and

coping using a sample of 511 full-time employees from Australia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka and revealed that cultural values such as individualism and collectivism were distributed randomly in both I-C paradigms, impacting stress and the ability to cope differently. This study suggested that 'country or nation was not the same as cultural values and could not be used interchangeably' (p.10) based on the easy mobility of people during this age of globalisation. Oei, Sawang, Goh and Mukhtar (2013) further examined an instrument that is commonly used to measure depression, stress, and anxiety (DASS-21 vs DASS-18), suggesting that 'cultural variation may influence the individual's experience and emotion expression' (p.10). To ensure internal reliability and avoid large residuals and cross-loadings, three items of the DASS-21 ('I found it difficult to relax'; 'I found myself getting agitated'; and 'I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy') were removed from their Asian samples (Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand), renaming it as DASS-18 scale. This lack of appropriate validation amongst Asian populations suggests that scholars should use quantitative scales in assessing culture more cautiously, pointing to the fact that one country's inherent cultural factors can influence the perception, interpretation as well as understanding of the scale.

As entrepreneurship is not made possible without actions (Dimov, 2007) and cultural values seem to only have been proven to affect the cognition of an entrepreneur (Busenitz & Lau, 1996), the mysterious gap that exists between cultural values, EIs and subsequent actions is not surprising. Stephan and Pathak (2016) suggested that cultural values are instead 'distal' drivers of entrepreneurship and that cultural leadership expectations (views of ideal attributes, motives, and behaviours that people believe to characterise

outstanding leadership) may show a more immediate relevance to entrepreneurship than do general cultural values. However, their research still did not identify the mechanism through which such expectations or beliefs are established and then affect the entrepreneurial behaviours; thus, studying culture from the level of cognitive processing may provide a useful explanation. Mainly, if each stage during the entrepreneurial process can exert its influence on the decision to act and move an opportunity forward, will there be some particular aspects of culture that significantly or dominantly influence only a particular stage of this process? Will there be cultural values that work on both the cognitive and behaviour processing of the entrepreneur during this process?

2.4.2 Adaptive Culture (Personal, Cultural and Societal)

In recent decades, globalisation has become prominent in many parts of the world. Globalisation is widely thought of as involving cultural homogenisation; or, more specifically, a process involving the increasing influence – or, in some cases, domination – of one societal or regional culture over all others (Robertson, 1994). An investigation into adaptive cultural identity requires research to explore the notions of *identity* and *how it adapts to culture*, both of which are central to the argument presented in this section and have been the subject of many debates.

The term 'identity' has several meanings, depending on the approaches taken (e.g., personal and social) with multiple aspects of identity identified (e.g., sexual and vocational personal identities; ethnic and class-based social identities). Schwartz et al. (2006) suggested that the definition of identity should include both personal and social

components. Following a postmodern conceptualisation of culture and identity, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argued that identity does not exist, but is instead a 'catch-all' term used to represent almost anything pertaining to the self. Thus, Gergen (1991) acknowledged the existence of identity but claimed that it is 'constantly in flux' and cannot be isolated as a permanent construction. However, a primary criticism of the postmodernist movement from a modernist point of view is that viewing identity as being constantly in flux creates problems without offering viable solutions (e.g., Chandler, 1995) as it is impossible to account for even 'a small amount of variability' (Schwatz et al., 2006). Since this study does not intend to engage in the debate over the legitimacy of the view of identity as constantly in flux and impossible to locate, this approach can provide research with a sufficiently 'useful theoretical work' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p.11) and the flexibility to consider both personal and social aspects of identity (Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, it may be useful for this study to stand on a middle ground between the modernist and postmodernist perspectives with such a conception of identity that is also flexible enough to be applied across different social and cultural contexts. In this sense, both home-country culture and host country culture can influence a decision to act at a certain time during opportunity development.

This review on adaptive identity is important as it gives an understanding of how home and host country cultures influence the decision-making during each stage of entrepreneurship for the group of immigrant entrepreneurs. The levels of solidarity and favouritism toward one's ingroup(s) may be studied through the home-country culture of the immigrants in affluent countries, especially amongst the groups of people who are

forced to leave the country in search of economic incentives or political protection. For example, the Vietnamese diaspora in the UK as victims, based on Cohen's (2009) typology of a refugee diaspora, can help to understand the dominant role of each cultural value on the decision to act. Depending on the ability to bond and the level of interactions between these in-group members, the adaptive culture view on immigrant entrepreneurs allows this research to consider aspects of home-country culture that are not fully adapted, independently influencing the decision to act during the entrepreneurial process.

2.4.3 Home country's cultural values during migration entrepreneurship

It is difficult to ignore the influence of home-country culture on the entrepreneurial activities of immigrants in affluent countries. A few immigrant groups, like the Chinese in London, may exhibit a tendency to exclude themselves from the host country (Chau & Yu, 2001). This phenomenon can be seen from the fact that immigrant groups adjust their traditions, cultural values and social norms to acclimatise to the adopted country while retaining a strong connection with their host country culture (Hamilton et al., 2008). Basu and Altinay (2002) investigated the cultural attributes of different immigrant communities in London in order to identify how these home-country cultural values affect their entrepreneurial behaviour (motives for entry, level of family involvement, and financing patterns). The result suggested that cultural aspects manifested by the tradition of family, motives for emigration, family connections, religion, entrepreneurial experience, and level of education may cause the interaction between home-country culture and entrepreneurship in the host country to be stronger in some ethnic communities than others. This is an important finding, as it raises the need to study the aspects of cultures

of the home country in influencing the cognition and behaviour of a group of immigrant entrepreneurs (e.g., the Vietnamese in London) (Jung et al., 2001).

The section below looks at the context of Vietnam and how it is important to investigate the culture of Vietnam amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrants in London. The context of Vietnam is unique in the way that the people of Vietnam are generally fragmented and possess a high level of uncertainty avoidance due to excessive periods of colonisation and occupation by foreign forces, i.e., the Han Chinese and the French. It is the salient value of fragmentation that creates unique entrepreneurial perspectives of the Vietnamese people in affluent countries.

2.5 Part V: The Context of Vietnam

Physical activity has been a habit of mine for many years, and I cycle to work daily to keep fit. The distance from my home to university is not necessarily far, but cycling during rush hour in Hồ Chí Minh City in Vietnam (formerly known as Saigon in the time of Democratic South Vietnam) is always a challenge due to heavy traffic. It was a rainy day in September 2018 when I was cycling home as usual after teaching. There was a deluge of rain that obscured my vision. I could barely see a few metres ahead. I decided to seek shelter among the front porches of the buildings I was riding past. I spotted 'The Lancaster' - a four-star condotel on Le Thanh Ton Street of District 1 - serving mainly Japanese tourists and senior professionals on business trips from other affluent countries. Carrying my bike across a narrow pavement, I conveniently accessed the porch of the building with its roof structure covering the taxi drop-off area. Then, a security guard promptly approached me

and said: 'my friend, you cannot stay here. I know it's raining hard, but I am being watched by surveillance cameras to make sure that this area is vacant at all times. I will get fired if I allow anyone to block the way'. Looking into his eyes, I did not say a word and simply vacated the empty area, as there was no traffic passing by in the torrential rain. I could have negotiated to park my bike on the pavement without obstructing anyone, but I did not. I then pushed my bike home along the sidewalk in the monsoon, during which I was confused by one of the most significant teachings of Confucianism that concerns the welfare of people in society. Its principles have failed to remain an influence in modern Vietnam. There is low compassion, and people do not often have an adequate sense of responsibility for their behaviour guided by the principle of nhân (humanity/benevolence) and tín (trustworthiness). Like an instinctive reaction, modern Vietnamese people would make excuses for what they have done even when it has not been judged to be wrong (e.g., the surveillance cameras). Confucianism in Vietnam has undoubtedly evolved, and it is not uncommon to experience similar situations in connection with hostility or self-interest in Vietnam between one Vietnamese and another. This happens in many places in Vietnam, even in cities like Saigon that has the highest level of Western influence, let alone more culturally conservative towns in the North (e.g., Hanoi).

Vietnam is a one-party state ruled by the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP). It is culturally part of the group of countries with a Confucian heritage. Since the significant economic reform in 1986, Vietnam has undergone a rapid development process. Research often defines culture as shared values, meanings, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and language among people in a society (Guy, 1999; Schwartz, 2004). Hofstede & Bond (1988)

discussed four central values of Confucianism: unequal relationships, family as a prototype of all social organisations, virtuous behaviour towards others (sympathy), and being patient and showing perseverance in achievements in education. Based on their well-known IBM data, the authors suggested that neo-Confucian countries such as China, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea generally score relatively high on Power Distance, low on Individualism, and mid-range on Masculinity/Femininity. There is an exception in Japan, which scores relatively high on Masculinity. Accurately, the Vietnamese culture is characterised by high power distance, long-term orientation, and collectivism (Hofstede, 2013; Lan, 2002; Ralston et al., 2006; Truong, 2012). Social relationships feature substantial deference (or respect) to those of senior age, status, and rank, which has ultimately allowed a preference for a top-down decision-making approach amongst those holding formal authority such as government officers and business managers (Ashwill & Diep, 2005; Truong, 2012). Although the majority of research into management styles treats East Asians as culturally homogeneous, some studies observe differences based on distinctive cultural attitudes that govern the behaviours of people in these countries (Onishi & Bliss, 2006; Sternquist et al., 2004; Swierczek & Quang, 2004).

2.5.1 Confucianism and Village-based Pride during Vietnam's Feudal Times

Confucianism is a tradition encompassing religious, philosophical, political, social, and literary aspects with a rich and varied history not only in China but also in Southeast Asia. Confucianism can also be found to a lesser extent in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan due to

their recent political and cultural reforms during the nineteenth century. Confucianism defines relationships among individuals concerning five virtues: nhân (humanity/benevolence), lễ (righteousness), nghĩa (propriety), trí (wisdom), and tín (trustworthiness). It is undeniable that Confucianism has profoundly influenced the way of life of many modern-day Vietnamese. Still, there is a crucial difference with the way this ideology relates to the Chinese since the philosophy originated there (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2009). The 1,000 years of heavy influence of Chinese Confucianism and almost 80 years of communist rhetoric and ruling have made the fundamental liberal ideals in the West on human rights, democracy, equality, freedom, and critical thinking still unknown to many Vietnamese. This is especially more difficult for those who live in the distal countryside through less contact with Western influence during the French colonial period. Although Vietnam is ethnologically, biologically, socially, and culturally affinitive to the group of Southeast Asian nations (e.g., Indonesia and Thailand; Buttinger, 1972), the subcultures of this region are far less influential to the Vietnamese mindset as compared to Confucianism. With Confucianism having taken root thousands of years ago, the later 200-year French colonisation was ephemeral and, therefore, incapable of bringing radical change to the way of living in the country.

Historically, there were traces of a kingdom named Van Lang in the Red River delta (Modern-day Northern Vietnam) by the seventeenth century BC. This kingdom was subsequently annexed to other Vietnamese tribes in the further northern territories (southern part of Guangxi province of current China), forming a new nation, namely Au Lac, during the 3rd century BC. Both Van Lang and Au Lac were ruled under a matriarchal

system with their queens leading the royal family as well as the country, while the throne was passed down to the queen's eldest daughter. The most famous matriarchs from this period were the Trung sisters who inherited power from their mother during the Van Lang ruling. The incursion of Confucianism into Vietnam was made during the conquest of the Han Chinese (the current dominant ethnic group in China) between 206 BC and AD 220. During the same period, levirate was being practised as a custom by which widows were required to marry their deceased husband's brother (Mau Vu Van, 1970) in Vietnam. This tradition potentially led to the common practice of filial piety by modern-day Vietnamese. Therefore, customs such as this may not necessarily resemble the popular Confucian teachings from China. It is undeniable that there existed an intertwined tradition of pre-Confucian beliefs associated with ancestor worship during the Van Lang and Au Lac dynasties, which remains a significant religious ritual today. By 180 B.C, Au Lac was captured by the Nam Viet kingdom founded by a Qin general named Trieu Da (as a state amongst the various nations during the Warring States period between 481/403 BCE and 221 BCE in China. While there was much anecdotal evidence of past Chinese colonisation of Vietnam following this period, there was little hard fact. Such belief of Chinese domination was mostly derived from Chinese historic books written by the Chinese during four periods of Chinese invasion that happened periodically between 111 BC and 1427 AD. Throughout these years, many emperors of China (e.g., The Ming) implemented an assimilation policy on Vietnam on their invasions. Typical activities included demolishing architectural works, prohibiting people from performing traditional practice, burning Vietnamese bibliographies, records, books, and taking a vast number of educated people and merchants to China (Saigoneer, 2019). These deliberate attempts by the Chinese

resulted in historic documents including those written on the subjects of culture and arts by the Vietnamese being destroyed, leading to a biased view on this period of Chinese domination as a whole.

The Vietnamese, along with the Chinese, are generally included among the communities influenced by Confucianism, which in various permutations has been described as upholding the core values of 'stability' and 'family-centred structure' (Elman et al., 2002). Two of the central tenets of Confucianism are 1) the comparability of the order of the universe, planet Earth and humans regulated by a fundamental reason known as 'luân' including ruler/subject, father/son, husband/wife, older brother/younger brother, and friend/friend (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Kennedy, 2002). These 'luân's are to maintain natural stability in the society, and 2) the veneration of ancestors and parents as an extension of the core value of filial piety as well as favourable gratitude towards older people, especially senior individuals, in the society. Similar to the Chinese model, the Vietnamese Confucianism also provides emperors as 'sons of Heaven' who oversee and regulate all life events, including political, familial and marital relationships in the society (Nguyen 1998, p.248). Similarly, paternal power that was mainly reserved for men was absolute and their children and wives were expected to obey under any circumstances. Sexual discrimination further existed in a way that men often had the power to control their family's wealth while the wife had no assets of her own.

Furthermore, women, when married, were considered part of their husband's family. Male children were allowed to inherit power and wealth from their father when he passed away,

after which their mother was supposed to take care of and, to some degree, respect them for the rest of her life. Through this governance system that allows all men in the society to have power over a group of people, i.e., their wife and children, which is described in Hofstede and Bond (1988) as 'the prototype of all social organisations', the 'natural order' was firmly maintained throughout this long history under this 'unequal relationships' structure (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). As such, through the core values of venerating ancestors and the granted pride for being able to pass wealth down to the next generation, the Vietnamese society excessively favoured the values of 'stability' and 'natural order'; and these remain the central features of a typical Vietnamese mindset, despite the fall of imperial rule in the twentieth century. It is important to note that doing business under the guidelines of Confucian values may not be especially advantageous and may ultimately inhibit capitalist development (Weber, 1951). Still, the trust that is based on kinship gives rise to businesses that are trust-based and, in particular, business networks based on the familial relationship. Creativity and radical changes to business models, for example, are considered hazardous and require advice or approval from parents or even one's network. This tendency has also led to a situation where responsibility for individual activities is more collectively distributed amongst different people who take part in the decision-making process.

However, China also retained its influence on the former Au Lac by appointing a civilian representative and a military officer to control the territory, though the Chinese customs (Confucianism and Taoism) were not systematically imposed on the Vietnamese people. The administration of the people in the Au Lac territory was entrusted to the Vietnamese

feudal lords (Vu Van Mau, 1970). During the first centuries of the Chinese domination, the Han Chinese divided the former Au Lac into prefectures (tỉnh) and further into districts (quận), each of which was based on the geographical territory of a different Vietnamese tribe. These prefectures were maintained under the governance of the various feudal lords (district chiefs) (Dao Duy Anh, 1964). As a result, this arrangement helped the Vietnamese people kept their primary customs and way of life during this time, and Confucianism was only practised by the Chinese settlers and their descendants in Vietnam. This particular detail is a critical aspect raised in this research as it allowed the village-based pride and the wet rice cultivation tradition to remain influential throughout Vietnamese history. Vietnamese people, through this period of Chinese domination, gradually became both 'self-fragmented' and 'fragmented'. On the one hand, the divided territories in Vietnam created by the Chinese government, based on ethnic groups, had created a boundary for different Vietnamese tribes, which ultimately inhibited bonding and, hence, were 'fragmented'. On the other hand, each tribe over time turned out to be 'self-fragmented' through their own village-based pride. An enormous banyan tree could be the pride of a village while in another the villagers took pride in having a famously beautiful lady whose beauty was widespread and admired by the neighbouring villages, and in another a worshipped God with miraculous powers that would grant any wish. Having their own pride, these villages acted conservatively towards the tendency to communicate and collaborate with their neighbouring villages.

More recently, these self-fragmented and fragmented attitudes were observed during the international trade with other Asian neighbours and Europe before the French

colonisation of Vietnam in the seventeenth century. Geographically, Vietnam has an advantageous position in sea trading with its long coastline that stretches about 3,400 kilometres (2,144 miles) in an 'S' shape, extending from the North of Ha Long Bay in North Vietnam to the Gulf of Thailand. The ancient port of 'Hoi An' (meaning 'peaceful meeting place') was a famous old seaport of Vietnam established in 1595, although traces of human habitation in the area date back to 1,700 years before that. In the seventeenth century, a Jésuite Portuguese missionary, namely Valentin Carvalho, noted that merchant ships from China carried goods such as cloth, herbs, incense, jewellery, finely crafted shoes, glasses, pens, ink, needles, furniture, lanterns and even fruits and food such as oranges, lemons, pears, apples, persimmons, rice cakes, vermicelli, dried tea leaves, wheat flour, salt, salted eggs, ginger sauce, sweet soy sauce, and tofu. The merchant ships of the Netherlands from Surate and Coromandel traded cloth, lead, and fire pepper. Merchant boats from France sold weapons, iron, copper, and cloth. Merchant vessels from Portugal carried commodities such as brushes, sewing needles, bracelets, glass earrings, hats, bonnet hats, belts, and all types of shirts. However, most of these trading ships after unloading their products/freight bought back from Hoi An only raw silk and sugar. In fact, even though the country possesses a long coastline, it has never been known for its excellence in marine-based exports. The principal economic activity of the Vietnamese has been the primitive cultivation of wet rice using a labour-intensive farming method that requires a legion of farmers doing the soil preparation, seedling, transplantation, and harvesting of the rice all year round. With the right terrain such as plains and rivers and a tropical climate that was ideal for wet rice cultivation, as of the French colonial period, Vietnamese people for a long time did not see the need for

exploiting its gifted long coastline or for trading with the next village for survival. One of the values of Confucianism was to allow people to take pride in their 'stability' in life; and, with their different prefectures divided based on different ethnic tribes as described above, Vietnamese people maintained a habit of staying back together within the territory of their own village defined by a banyan tree, village water well, and the village communal temple (đình: a building dedicated to the worship of a village God). Any attempt to move outside of the village was considered a challenge or even a threat. The low appeal for products outside one's own village could be seen through rudimentary farming tools that were passed between generations without significant advancement. Over time, this habit inhibited invention and creativity.

There were exceptions in the form of local markets that were built in major prefectures that were once capitals in the feudal era. Here, if Vietnamese people ever wanted to trade, then selling in groups was popular. The Vietnamese idiom 'Buôn có bạn, bán có phường' meaning 'trade in groups, sell in groups' or 'a life without a friend is a life without sun' was popular amongst Vietnamese business communities in these marketplaces. For example, in the famous Hanoi's Old Quarter, a popular tourist area today, the streets were well-known for their endless displays and stock of hand-made goods that artisans and traders from the surrounding villages had brought over to sell there. A particular type of product was continuously displayed along a different road for many centuries. Items included silk, bamboo, silver, and brass, with each nearby village specialising in a particular good. Since most Vietnamese people felt unsafe doing business outside the territory of their own village, this tradition of trading a specific product at a designated

location (e.g., a street consisting of all people from their community) allowed traders to more easily control competition based on price from other villages. This self-fragmented attitude was considered beneficial to governing these activities in Vietnam at the time; and, although it was unclear as to whether it was deliberately encouraged by the Chinese imperial government, this phenomenon resulted in further fragmentation of the Vietnamese population.

It is undeniable that Confucianism has profoundly influenced the way of life of modern-day Vietnamese. However, there is a crucial difference in the way this ideology relates to the Chinese as the philosophy was home-grown in China (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2009). Confucianism in feudal China was practised alongside other doctrines such as Taoism, and both were seemingly inspired by the principles of I Ching (Classic of Changes or Book of Changes). I Ching was originally a divination manual in the Western Zhou period (1000–750 BC) and was considered a microcosm of the universe and a symbolic description of the processes of change by the old Chinese (although some historians believe the principles of I Ching were discovered by some early Vietnamese tribes who used to live in the southern area of Dongting Lake of current Hunan province, China). Its influence on Confucianism has been profound to the extent that most Confucian teachings were inspired by the 'natural' order of yin (negative/internal) and yang (positive/external). For example, the most significant values were a focus on the Four Books of Confucianism (namely, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects of Confucius, and Mencius) that make up the fundamental canon of Confucianism, including cultivating oneself (self-modelling and self-educating oneself)

[internal], taking care of the family (arranging everything for the family in harmony) [internal], governing the country (making the country peaceful) [external], and making the people have a peaceful life (ensure a happy life for people) [external]. These four values have been practised throughout the history of China by every family. However, the values concerning governing and making it a peaceful country for its civilians [the external] was not highly emphasised during the time of the Chinese colonisation of Vietnam for fear they would pose a threat and lead to uprisings and resistance in other forms from the Vietnamese. In other words, Confucianism was not wholly adopted during the Chinese domination and, by breaking the balance of the natural order and imposing it on the invaded Vietnam, the Chinese believed that the Vietnamese would become inactive and fragmented as a result of the excessive focus on the yin [internal]. The 1,000 years of the pernicious imposition produced a way of life that many at the present time can relate to as the quintessence of being Vietnamese – driven by high academic achievement and family well-being and lacking a sense of social responsibility and collaboration. Hitchcock and Wesner (2009) pointed out a difference between the Vietnamese and Chinese diasporas in London. While patrilineal families and guanxi (two or more persons sharing a commonality of identification, including non-relatives and foreigners) exist within the overseas Chinese community, the Vietnamese counterpart creates a network that often consists only of one's extended family and friends and information must remain within the family at all times.

2.5.2 The French Colonial Period

Confucianism remained dominant until the fifteenth century when Western clerics first arrived in Vietnam. However, it still preserved much of its authority during French colonial times in the 19th and 20th centuries. The French colonial period in Vietnam officially began in 1887 when Vietnam was referred to as French Indochina. That period lasted until 1954, with a break between 1941 and 1945 when the Japanese occupied Vietnam during World War II. During the 60 years that Vietnam fell under the rule of the French colonial government, it experienced a strong resonance in culture. The culture was constantly in flux, blending Western values into the dominant Confucianism at the time. The change can be seen through many aspects of the lives of the people of modern Vietnam, typically in cuisine, language, religion, architecture, fashion, education, and freedom of speech. Specifically, some Vietnamese dishes that have French influences are omelettes, bread, croissants, and anything fried in butter. Some French dishes were introduced into Vietnam during the colonial years due to the culinary needs of the French officers and their families; as a result, Vietnamese chefs learnt plenty of culinary skills and became proficient in using ingredients from both France and Vietnam. In terms of language, despite the past influence of Chinese scripts on the Vietnamese language system, the modern Vietnamese language consists of words of French origin that have been 'Vietnamised', such as 'xa bong' (savon - soap), 'xich lo' (cycle - tricycle), 'pho mat' (fromage - cheese), 'bo' (beurre - butter), 'bia' (bière - beer). Additionally, Roman Catholicism (or the Roman Catholic Church) was first introduced into Vietnam at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Nam Dinh – a province in North Vietnam (during the

Le Trung Hung Dynasty) by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries, breaking the monopolistic role of Confucianism in old Vietnam. The French government even allowed Vietnamese people to follow their own religious belief, promoting religious freedom for the first time in Vietnam since its establishment in the seventeenth century BC. As a result, Catholics and followers of other religions were emancipated from a long period of religious persecution under feudal dynasties.

Architecture is also a compelling case to study. In some major cities like Saigon, Hanoi or Dalat (a town that is situated in the middle of pine forests in a pleasant locale and can be easily accessed from the old imperial capital of Hue), there exist great works in the form of French architecture, with high arches, balconies, and symmetrical columns. Some of the more prominent buildings that are currently tourist attractions include the Hanoi Opera House, the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Opera House in Saigon, as well as many other French-architecture villas in the hills surrounding downtown Dalat. In modern-day Vietnam, some middle-class Vietnamese still have a preference for houses with French architectural features. With regards to fashion, before the French colonial period, Vietnamese costumes were imbued with feudalism and were distinguishable by social strata. While the costumes of kings and mandarins were influenced by the Chinese feudal court, the clothes of the working people (e.g., peasants) were in the form of brown robes, black silk pants, long dresses, and flat palm hats and fringes. During the French colonial period, these costumes became influenced by Western fashion. Long skirts were favoured by noblewomen, e.g., Queen Nam Phuong (the last queen of the Nguyen dynasty). Many well-educated men would wear long pants and white collared shirts made

by French tailors. Finally, to more effectively rule Vietnam, the French set the goal of eliminating Confucianism, Chinese characters, and Nom scripts, and replacing them with Latin scripts. Vietnamese people were even allowed to pursue their academic interests in economics, science, and technology in order to serve in the colonial government. The three major influences that are raised in this thesis are economic development, the changing of the Vietnamese scripts into a Latin-based language, and freedom of speech.

Although there was a significant improvement in the economic conditions under the French colony, Vietnam's economic strengths remained in low-tech agriculture and raw mining, which consisted of activities that often inhibited creativity as found in small enterprises. Paul Doumer, the governor-general from 1897 to 1902 for French Indochina, brought shape and substance to Vietnam with international trade and capital investment that went hand in hand with a bureaucratic re-organisation. This reconstruction was considered a turning point in French Indochina's economic development, serving the purposes of supplying the French during its industrial revolution and its involvement in the two world wars. From 1888 to 1918, the economic output of the French in Indochina amounted to 249 million gold francs in manufacturing and mining, 128 million in shipping, 75 million in trade and 40 million in agriculture. Most of these manufacturing and mining projects were labour intensive, including breweries, tobacco factories, textile mills, rice production, electrical works, and cement. To link Hanoi and Saigon to create a smooth transport system and a countrywide telegraph service to handle heavy vehicles brought in by the French, roads and rails were built, which ultimately improved the imperial postal service established in the 10th century by the Vietnamese feudal governments. Although

French rural penetration was achieved through the combination of rivers, railways, and highways, the construction of a large seaport and harbour complexes allowed the facilitation of overseas trade that concentrated in Saigon and Haiphong, both situated upriver and close to the sea. In the Southern area (Cochinchina), rice exports had increased almost fourfold between 1860 and 1880, and rubber production increased from 298 tons in 1915 to 3,159 tons in 1919, 6,796 tons in 1924, and 10,309 tons in 1929. From central highland provinces, e.g., Gia Lai, to those in the Southeast, e.g., Binh Duong, many of these rubber plantations remain productive and contribute greatly to the improved living conditions of many locals. The technological transfer was slow, often through Vietnamese governmental officers via their overseas studies in France to serve the French colonial government. These changes by the French Colonial government helped instil the ideas of *long-term orientation* and being *pragmatic* in doing business in the Vietnamese society.

The French had a significant linguistic influence on 'Chữ Quốc Ngữ' (literally 'national language script') as the modern writing and alphabet systems for the Vietnamese language. During the sixteenth century, Francisco de Pina, a Portuguese missionary, and Italian Jesuit missionaries in Vietnam found it difficult to learn the Vietnamese language and initiated a transcription project turning the language into a form of Latin alphabet, which contributed significantly to the development of the present Vietnamese alphabet. In the seventeenth century, Francisco de Pina's work was continued by Avignon missionary Alexandre de Rhodes whose name is now used for a street in central Saigon in recognition of his reconstruction of the Vietnamese writing system, extricating it from

the Chinese-influenced hieroglyphic system. Thus, the modern Vietnamese language employed the Latin alphabet with some digraphs and nine accent marks or diacritics, making additional sounds and indicating the tone of each word. The diacritics make the Vietnamese language easily recognisable amongst different languages using the Latin alphabet.

Despite the benefit of using Latin characters in the modern Vietnamese writing system, where native speakers can rhyme and pronounce the letters that are put together (onomatopoeia), there are substantial cultural implications in connection with multiple possible meanings associated with a single spoken word in modern Vietnamese. This inadequacy of the Vietnamese alphabet means that a word can be pronounced without explicitly expressing its exact meaning, in contrast to the old 'Nom' or 'Han' scripts (hieroglyphics). In fact, Han and Nom scripts were originally hieroglyphs with each symbol having its own meaning; and, when put together, they would complement each other semantically. Therefore, there may be a number of completely different meanings of the same word as a combination of letters. For example, when saying the word 'phong', most Vietnamese people will think of 'wind'. However, in Nom script, there are many words pronounced as 'phong' but the meaning and hieroglyphic writing are completely different (e.g., 'phong' as 'seal' in the phrase 'a sealed letter'). If we only rely on the pronunciation of the word without acknowledging its hieroglyph, we are liable to misunderstand the exact meaning. This has created a tendency to question a word of Nom or Han origin, further increasing the *suspicion* that had already existed through the

long history of colonisation and short migration within Asia (Hitchcock and Wesner, 2009).

Freedom of speech, religious freedom, and gender equality were introduced for the first time under French colonial rule. Women under the view of Confucianism were often responsible for raising children and acting as housewives. As a result, women received fewer opportunities to access education than men in feudal times. Changes to this societal role took place during the French colonial period as many young girls were able to attend art schools, education, and music, and later were able to work in journalism, allowing a strong movement for gender equality during the twentieth century. Many of the prominent writers in South Vietnam in the early twentieth century were females including Ho Thi Que, Lê Ngọc Diệp, Tran Thi Huong Khanh, Huynh Thi Kim Lien, and Suong Nguyet Anh.

2.5.3 The coup d' état by Viet Minh (the Communist North Government)

In 1940, during the Second World War, Imperial Japan took over French Indochina coinciding with their ally Nazi Germany's invasion of France. The French colonial government existed in parallel with the Japanese authority directing policies in Indochina. At first, the Japanese promised to give autonomy to the emperor's court at Huế (capital of Vietnam at the time). Subsequently, they coerced Bảo Đại (emperor of Vietnam) into declaring Vietnamese independence from France in 1945 as a member of Japan's

'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'. The country then became the Empire of Vietnam.

Việt Minh was an independence coalition formed at Pác Bó (in North Vietnam) by Hồ Chí Minh on 19 May 1941. The group was formerly called the League for the Independence of Vietnam. It was formed by anti-French and anti-Japanese resistance intellectuals in Nanjing, China, at some point between August 1935 and early 1936. This organisation soon lapsed into inactivity, only to be revived by the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) and Hồ Chí Minh in 1941, adding to it an Anti-imperialist United Front. Seizing opportunity as the conflict was going on between the French and Japanese forces, a coup was organised on 19 August 1945 by Hồ Chí Minh, with statements resembling the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776 in an attempt to seek the support of the USA. As the USA did not respond to Hồ Chí Minh's request, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), ultimately as a one-party state, continued to be run by the ICP with the backing of the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union members.

Although France attempted to re-establish its influence in Indochina after 1945, Laos gained its independence in 1949, and Cambodia became independent in 1953. In March 1954, the French troops were humiliated in a defeat by Viet Minh forces at Dien Bien Phu. The defeat solidified the end of French rule in Indochina. Following this event, both the French and the Japanese attempted to reinstate former emperor Bảo Đại offering him a chance to be equipped with armed power and stop Hồ Chí Minh. However, Bảo Đại

eventually became less committed to countering the communist nationalist. The emperor then lived out his life in exile in France.

As a result, the Geneva Accords in July 1954 was signed, establishing North and South Vietnam with the 17th parallel as the dividing line. The agreement also stipulated that elections were to be held within two years to unify Vietnam under a single democratic government. Such elections never happened. It was estimated that approximately one million people fled the Communist zone (North Vietnam) and settled in the Democratic South. Catholic nationalist Ngo Dinh Diem emerged as the leader of South Vietnam, with US backing. In contrast, the communist nationalist - Hồ Chí Minh - led the North under the support of Communist International (China and the former Soviet Union).

2.5.4 From the Vietnam War to Economic Reforms

In April 1954, during a speech, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower claimed that the fall of French Indochina to communists could create a 'domino' effect in Southeast Asia. This so-called domino theory guided US thinking on Vietnam for the next decade. The Vietnam war took place between 1955 and 1975 ending in victory for North Vietnam.

After the Fall of Saigon in 1975 until 1986, Vietnam's economy experienced a sluggish growth rate due to its public policies towards capitalist elimination in the private economic sectors of former South Vietnam, not to mention the US-led trade embargos. With further denied reconstruction aid from China and the Soviet Union and the

weakening power of the Soviet Union, Vietnam plunged into poverty. Two significant events that took place between the military's victory in North Vietnam and the economic reforms that strongly influenced the cultural values of the people of Vietnam were three anti-capitalism campaigns ('đánh tư sản') in 1975, 1978, and 1979 (initiated by Decree 111/QDCP in 1975) and three currency changing crises ('đổi tiền') in 1975, 1978, and 1985. During these three anti-capitalism campaigns, much of the private accumulation, government assets and properties of the former Saigon Administration (South Vietnam) were foreclosed to become public assets under the control of the new communist government. Many of the officers serving the previous government in the South were sent to new 'economic zones' (remote mountainous areas) or imprisoned. These campaigns were done in parallel with a wave of North Vietnam officers confiscating the private property of former South Vietnam across South Vietnam. South Vietnam's currency, the South Vietnam Dong ('đồng') issued in 1953, was first changed to the North Vietnam Dong, or 'liberation đồng',' on 22 September 1975, with 500 South Vietnam Dong equal to 1 North Vietnam Dong, aiming to equalise all capitalist accumulation amongst the people of the whole Vietnam, following the ideology of 'societal equality' in communism. The result turned out to be disastrous, causing extreme high inflation and starvation amongst South Vietnam people, while North Vietnam benefitted from exploiting South Vietnam and became wealthier. These events eventually led to a wave of several million South Vietnamese people fleeing Vietnam to seek refuge in non-communist countries (or 'boat people') before the economic reforms in 1986.

Figure 2.5.1: South Vietnamese officers and families in New Economic Zones in 1976

Source: Getty Images

In 1979, the international community regarded the situation as a humanitarian crisis. Two main reasons for their concern were identified: 1) the security and well-being of refugees from the statistics showed that roughly ten per cent of the' 'boat' people had been killed at sea due to drowning, food and water shortages, pirate attacks, and diseases, leading to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Poul Hartling, calling it 'an appalling human tragedy'; and 2) the resettlement plan for these people since none of the countries in Southeast Asia where most of them had first landed (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) had signed the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and hence had no legal obligation to grant asylum. Later, these countries agreed to provide temporary asylum under the condition that Vietnam was implementing the Orderly Departure Programme alongside other countries. Below is a quotation from *Chapter 4: Flight from Indochina* of the book *The State of the World's Refugees, 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* by UNHCR:

None of the countries receiving Vietnamese boat people gave them permission to stay permanently and some would not even permit temporary refuge. Singapore refused to disembark [allow to go ashore] any refugees who did not have guarantees of resettlement [in other countries] within 90 days. Malaysia and Thailand frequently resorted to pushing boats away from their coastlines. When Vietnamese boat arrivals escalated dramatically in 1979, with more than 54,000 arrivals in June alone, boat 'pushbacks' became routine and thousands of Vietnamese may have perished at sea as a result. At the end of June 1979… Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand… [announced] that they had 'reached the limit… and would not accept any new arrivals.

Figure 2.5.2: Boat people from Vietnam

Source: Getty Images

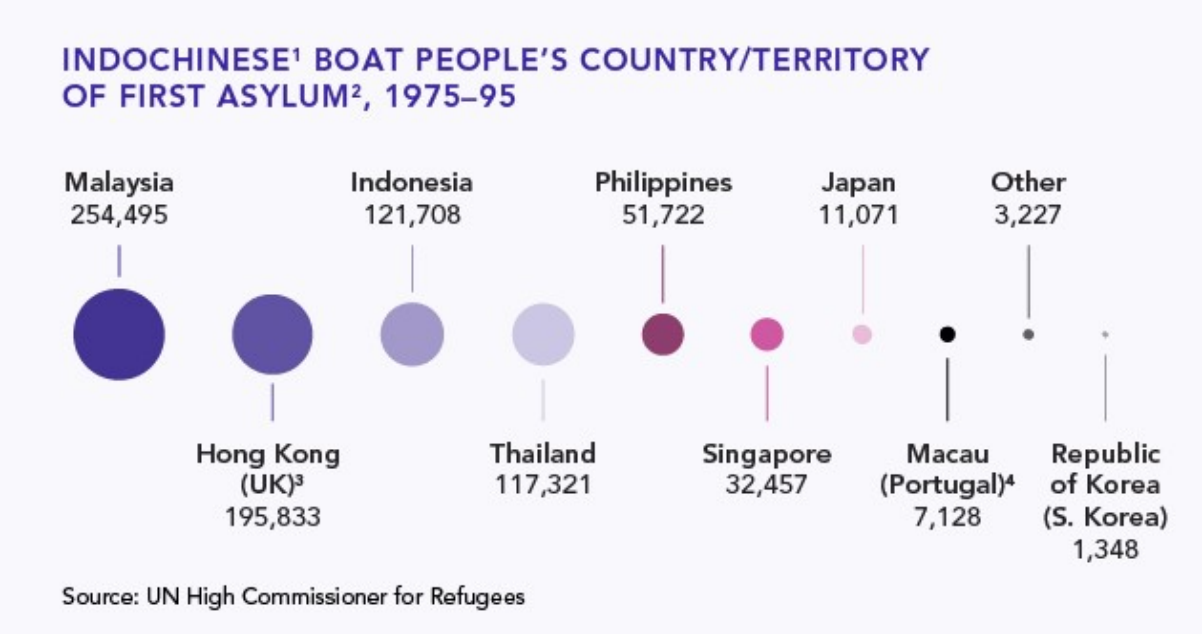


Figure 2.5.3: Indochinese Boat People's Country/Territory of First Asylum, 1975-95

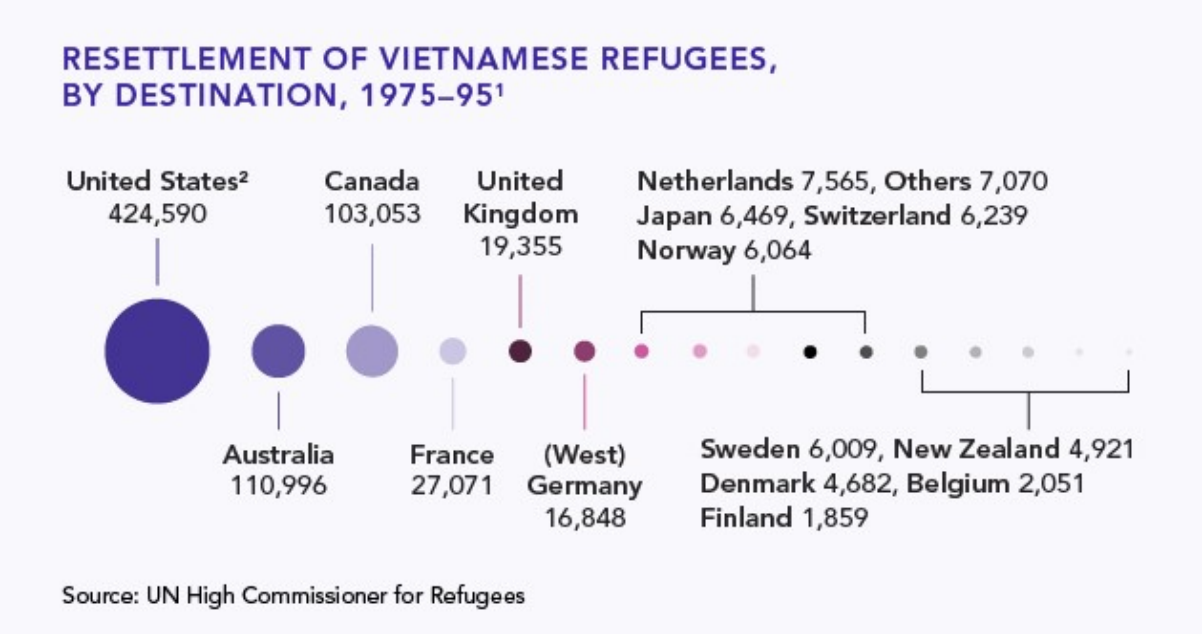


Figure 2.5.4: Resettlement of Vietnamese Refugees, by destination, 1975-95

2.5.5 Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam

Given the intense political interdependence between the North Vietnamese government and China Communist Party, similarities in neoliberal governance between the two countries are inevitable. Since the introduction of the Doi Moi (Open Door Policy) in 1986, Vietnam has transformed from central planning to a socialist-oriented market economy, which is the official term for the economic system that exists in Vietnam today. This concept combines government planning with free-market incentives, a concept that is unfamiliar to the rest of the world, except for China. The reason for this is that this process of transformation was considered the 'most successful and comprehensive replication' of China's 'Open Door policy' in 1978 initiated by Deng Xiaoping, opening up China to foreign businesses that wanted to invest in their country.

Past research has suggested two forms of entrepreneurship, necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship and noted their ramifications for the economy (Acs et al., 2008; Reynolds et al., 2002). The Open-Door reforms, therefore, aimed at only promoting necessity entrepreneurship. Many of these new economic policies were enacted out of economic necessity for the survival of socialism in Vietnam. While 'Open Door' allowed policies that supported the development of the economic sector, the political system remained untouched as the country continued to be a one-party state led by the VCP, while the media remained under full control by the same party (Vietnam is presently ranked 175/180 in the Press Freedom Ranking Table 2020 by Reporters Without Borders). A socialist-oriented market economy can be understood in the sense that economic

reforms allowed the private sector to act as a driving force for economic growth. At the same time, the state still plays the central role of orienting, building and completing economic institutions and creating an environment for fair, transparent and healthy competition (Vietnam Law Magazine, 2015). In other words, a market-oriented economy would have to exist in Vietnam in order to build the necessary economic infrastructure to develop the productive forces and advance its capability to achieve social wealth as stated in 1986 when the 6th Party Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party initiated the Doi Moi economic reforms. The economic reforms involved significant changes such as de-collectivisation of land, dissolution of cooperatives, and promotion of the newly permitted private sector including family as an economic unit and a multisector commodity economy. However, all land remains collectively owned and managed by the Vietnamese state, which means individuals are only able to lease it up to 50 years. These relaxed policies come along with more lenient restrictions on trade and physical mobility, acting as a thriving motor for commercial activities at different levels and in different scopes.

Public policy is 'whatever governments choose to do or not to do' on the issue of public concern (Dye, 2010, p.2), or 'a purposive course of action followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or matters of concern' (Anderson, 2014, p.5). The Doi Moi reforms in 1986 paved the way for more market opportunities by loosening the physical and economic restrictions for individuals and families, allowing them to run their businesses. Despite being characterised by being open to individual businesses, the post-reform era is not marked by a complete retreat of the state, but rather by new modes of

governance, which by no means is an improvement in democracy or reduction in power. Private entities depend significantly on the government to acquire licences, which often require connections and political power. Licences are freely bought and sold by government officers through their family members or relatives, although the political elites utilise the majority of them to their economic advantage. Therefore, workers need to work harder for less and, if they wish to have more, they need to associate themselves with the Communist Party. Inequality often exists in how the government makes public policy. For example, on a macro level of analysis, Hồ Chí Minh city generates the highest tax income of which 80 per cent is sent to Hanoi and redistributed to other provinces with a tax income deficit as of 2018. Corruption rates remain high, but no one is allowed to talk politics in any form of conversation. The Secretary of the Party must be someone who originates from, and who has a strong communist loyalty to, the Northern territory of Vietnam. This individual must also have a strong and loyal political stance on the ideology of communism ('có lý luận'). The authoritarian one-party state controls the licences for operating a particular business, meaning that individuals require some connection with the Party in order for their business to thrive and big players in the market are often directly or indirectly related to people in power.

2.5.6 Vietnamese neo-Confucianism

What I found during this visit was a culture in ruins. Vietnam's best fiction writers no longer write fiction. Its poets no longer write poetry, except for those who circulate their work in underground samizdats. Journalism is a corrupt enterprise controlled by the government. Ditto for publishing. History is a subject too dangerous to study. Freedom of religion, thought, speech—none exists. The country has silenced or driven into exile its intellectual talent. In this wasteland has sprouted a relentlessly commercial culture. The Communist Party of Vietnam, through its state-owned enterprises and its hammerlock on corporate financing, controls the economy at the top. Only because famine forced its hand did it allow pushcart vendors and petits-commerçants to compete at the bottom. Can a country this lopsided carry on forever without falling on its face?'

-- Thomas A. Bass – Censorship in Vietnam: Brave New World --

The victory of the Communist North over Democratic South has marked a curb on the influence of Western cultural values that were more widespread in the former South Vietnam during its five centuries trading with the Europeans, which ultimately paves the way for the return of an alternative version of Confucianism conceived through a series of historical events in feudal times, war campaigns, as well as economic levelling and terror carried out by the communist government that followed the civil war. After the war, the communist government initiated the capitalism crack-down projects between 1975 and 1986 in South Vietnam (or 'đánh tư sản' in Vietnamese) through which the new government confiscated private property from owners who had fought for South Vietnam against the communist ideology and anyone who allied themselves with South Vietnam and the United States, and 'nationalised' many southern businesses to become state-owned corporations alongside the 're-education' camps that aimed to brainwash former South Vietnamese officers to accept communist ideology. The training, ranging between three and seventeen years, was explicitly designed with prison labour and forced

communist ideological instilment. People in these 're-education camps' often experienced severe hunger, indefinite detention, as well as ongoing psychological and physical hardship leading to several million South Vietnamese people fleeing the country as soon as they had a chance in the following two decades.

There is one conflicting issue relating to these values in modern-day Vietnam. The reason why this thesis focuses on using the term 'morality' rather than 'ethics' is that the word 'moral' derives from the Latin word *mos*, which means 'way of comporting oneself' within social interactions (Beidelman, 1986, p. 2), while 'ethics', on the other hand, refers to more codified and elaborated judgements. It is also generally assumed that 'morality' evokes the general discourse on what is good, which can be constantly negotiated as opposed to being timeless and static (Heintz, 2009). During the civil war, these values were strongly damaged by the uprisings of rural peasants and farmers associating themselves with the Communist force in South Vietnam, breaking the hierarchal social structure that respects well-educated individuals and successful business people who often associated themselves with Western civilisation. However, under the current view of the authoritarian Vietnamese government, the most appreciated value relating to 'morality' is often defined as being from a farming background and not acting in a reactionary way to the government (submissive), police and armed forces, government officers as well as public policies and what is taught in public school. The idiom 'dĩ hòa vi quý', which is equivalent to the English idiom 'live and let live', meaning to 'tolerate other people's actions and expect them to tolerate one's own' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019), has become a popular closing statement for most unfriendly discussions between the Vietnamese.

On the one hand, such inequalities and the tendency to avoid the uncertainty that is common to the Vietnamese in modern times may further enhance the mindset of perseverance and patience as an important tenet of Confucian teaching, in a way that might be seen as advantageous to migrant communities in particular. On the other hand, there is inherent fragmentation that exists amongst the people of Vietnam resulting from these inequalities. The lack of a united nationalism can be seen through activities such as supporting the national football team during the football championship, during which people have a chance to bond and become more connected.

Figure 2.5.5: Streaming football matches and communist flags have been seen as a way to promote unity amongst the people of Vietnam (taken in central Saigon in 2018)

Source: VNExpress

A recent example of fragmented Vietnam was presented during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The country had discovered its first cases; how its people and businesses responded, however, was an emblematic display of a fragmented country. Individuals and medical stores would sell face masks and hand sanitizers at exorbitant prices up to 20 times higher than the normal prices. Several individuals would offer face masks of unclear origin. Ordinary people would collect medical masks in large quantities when they could, leaving other members in the society who are in urgent need of the commodity, healthcare workers in particular, with a shortage of protective masks.

As with the value of 'harmony', there is also an emphasis on the value of 'face' in Confucian teachings, which plays an essential role in cultivating the conflict of morality. 'Face' can be maintained through working on two dimensions of Lian and Mianzi – in which Lian is associated with personal behaviour, and Mianzi is something valuable that can be achieved. The idea of 'losing face' can be avoided with high academic achievement, either by oneself or family members. Through the maintenance of face, a Vietnamese person can achieve 'filial piety', which involves honouring the ancestors and obedience to, respect for, and financial support of parents. Under the Communist rule, the younger generations of Vietnam adopt the discriminative and hateful tradition against the former South Vietnam government and Americans during their twelve years of primary and secondary education. According to Dung Hue Doan, 'in higher education, the ideas of inculcating socialist thoughts and socialist principles are as important as building intellectual ability. Thus, Marxist sciences/philosophy and Hồ Chí Minh ideology are compulsory taught courses making up to 12% of the total study hours in the

undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum.' Power is heavily concentrated outside the school, requiring political relationships which allow control and access to resources (Truong et al., 2017). A decision is often made in a 'top-down' fashion representing one-way communication between leaders and teachers (Thanh, 2008). For example, a typical primary, secondary or high school in Vietnam is indirectly overseen by a Board under the control of the Communist Party based at its District People's Committee (Bui & Nguyen, 2010), which ultimately exerts considerable formal and informal authority over school operations. Since the emphasis is on the political and cultural transmission as opposed to skill development in the Vietnamese education system (Hallinger & Trung, 2015; Truong et al., 2017), critical thinking, therefore, is not a focus during childhood as anything reactionary to public policies would not be allowed. Besides, children are entitled to rely on their parents for tuition fees during higher education. In fact, gifted high school students in Vietnam often score high on the four central values of Confucianism (Nguyen, Jin and Gross, 2010), indicating the application of Confucian values in education in modern-day Vietnam towards the goal of maintaining a stable society under the Communist rule, despite the violent path that the Northern Communist took to seize power during the civil war. As a result, Vietnamese people often adopt passive thinking and behaviour and are suspicious of foreigners. Entrepreneurship is not a favoured pathway for most people according to the 'stability' value that emerged from Confucian principles and the passive approach to thinking and behaviour.

In a related context in South East Asia such as Malaysia, where 'spoon-feeding' exists during primary and secondary school, Ismail, Sawang and Zolin (2018), using a quasi-

experiment with 308 undergraduate students in Malaysia, attempted to answer the research question of 'Do different pedagogies used in teaching entrepreneurship education (EE) influence individual skill development, which then, in turn, translates into a likelihood of entrepreneurial implementation intention?' The authors find that the teacher-centred approach, as compared to the student-centred approach, provides students with a more robust understanding of entrepreneurial activity and its benefits, which is explained as equivalent to achieving a higher level of objective and subjective learning outcomes, including the determination of the suitability of changing mindsets, attitudes, and entrepreneurial desirability, and acquiring relevant various managerial and entrepreneurial skills (Fretschner & Weber, 2013; Hytti & O'gorman, 2004). According to the Euromonitor Entrepreneurship report (2013), students in Vietnam had one of the highest levels of EI amongst countries in South East Asia, but their 'fear of failure' also topped the chart. Incubators and funding for entrepreneurship are limited, and education in Vietnam was not designed to build up confidence in students' entrepreneurial capabilities, which is also a barrier to resilience.

On a broader level, Vietnam, with its large population, offers the retail industry great opportunities with increased consumption. The Doi Moi reforms, coupled with its trading culture from feudal times, have created a street trading culture in Vietnam. It is easy to start a small business with a stall as a street vendor taking advantage of the pedestrian space. There are two reasons behind this. The first one is that the communist rhetoric supports sharing power with the working class, and these kinds of activity, which violate the law of occupying public areas, as a result, are often ignored by the local authority. The

second one, which requires further thought, is that as an authoritarian government that controls the country's natural resources and army, giving its people a chance to run small-scale businesses (or giving them their own small space) creates a false impression of freedom in the country. The street trading culture, therefore, continues to grow amongst other neatly located high-street stores prosperously. The hi-tech industry, as a result, suffers from this easy market penetration.

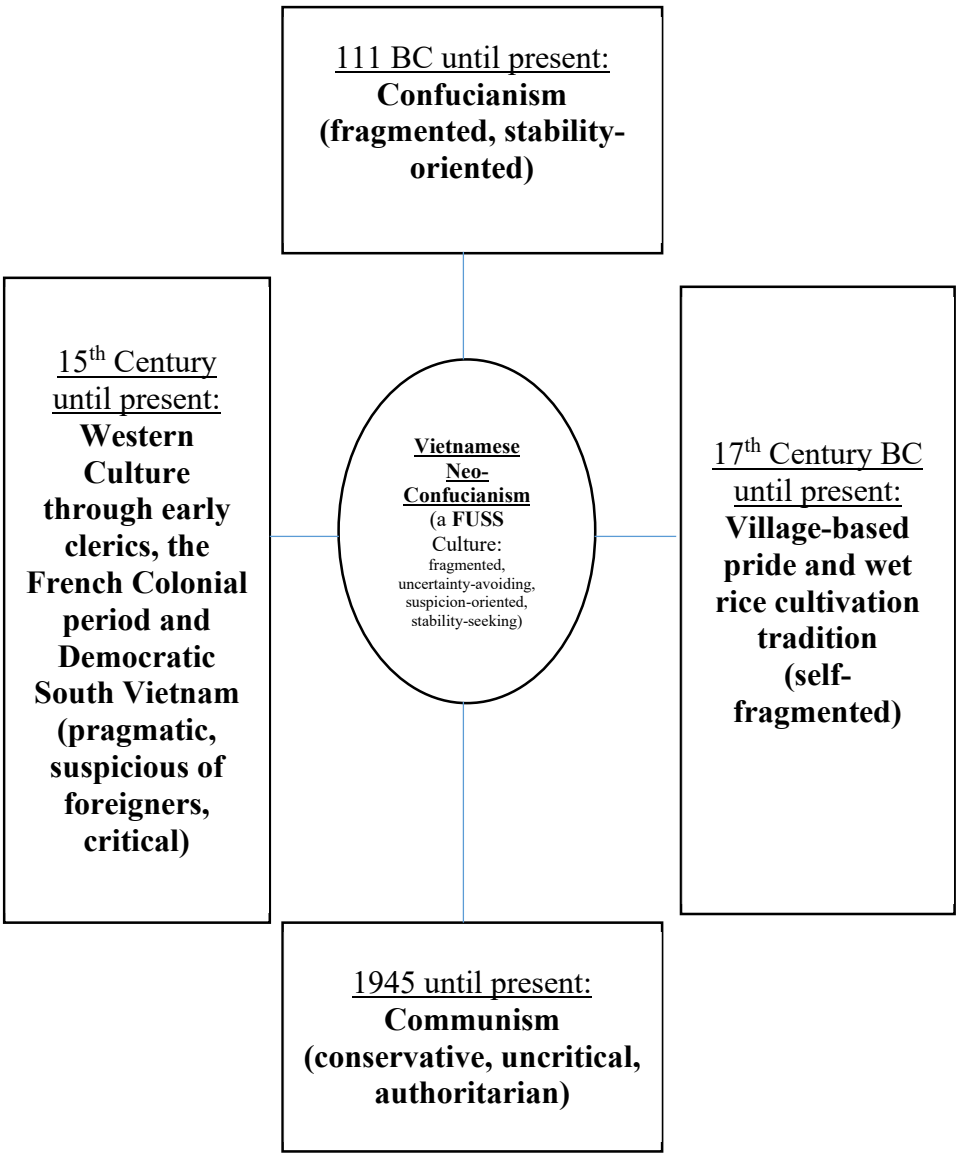


Figure 2.5.6: Four major elements of modern Vietnamese culture (Author's Own)

FUSS is defined as 'unnecessary excitement, worry or activity, often about something unimportant' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). In the context of this research, each letter of the word 'fuss' indicates the first letter of a word that represents a value of Vietnamese neo-Confucianism conceived throughout the history of Vietnam. These are **f**ragmented, **u**ncritical, **s**uspicion-oriented, **s**tability-seeking. Although the modern-day Vietnamese are known for being steady (or hard-working and persevering), the people of its 64 provinces do not seem to share many characteristics. As a result, people are **fragmented** across different aspects in life, creating a **suspicious** attitude towards each other; and, unlike the Chinese who are also strongly influenced by neo-Confucian values, the long history of colonisation and limited immigrant entrepreneurship of the Vietnamese extend this suspicion towards most overseas individuals, especially the Chinese. Also, the education system and the way that the Communist government promotes communist ideology have made Vietnamese people **uncritical** of matters that should be important to their well-being such as environment, social welfare, and government transparency. People, therefore, seek to remain **stable** at all times. For example, the media in Vietnam is only allowed to use the word 'foreign forces' when mentioning military attacks by Chinese forces (e.g., Third Indochina War - a brief border war fought between the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in early 1979) without being questioned. Given the correlation between a country's culture and the business practice of its people (Hofstede & Bond, 1993; Yan & Sorenson 2004), a 'fuss' culture, in fact, is not in favour of creating multinational organisations with an international presence or businesses that offer radical changes to science and technology on a large scale. This culture, instead, offers a favourable environment for the Vietnamese to continue with their

long tradition of street trading culture since feudal times. This trading culture, on the one hand, can help the communist government achieve its goal of economic stability (Thayer, 2001), but is 'unnecessary and unimportant to the development of the world' or a 'fuss'. For this reason, it is not surprising that Vietnam is consistently ranked in The Good Country Index, which measures what each country contributes to the common good of humanity based on categories of science and technology, culture, international peace and security, world order, planet and climate, prosperity and equality, and health and well-being (Goodcountry.org, 2019). In fact, Vietnam is most known for its cheap labour, primarily serving the textiles, food and beverages, wood and furniture products, and low-tech electronics manufacturing industries (Ha, 2019; Le & Harvie, 2010).

Neo-Confucian Value	**Chinese context**	**Vietnamese context**
Fragmented	Low to Moderate due to the existence of two separate political entities each calling themselves 'China' including People's Republic of China (communist) and Republic of China or Taiwan (democratic) after the Chinese civil war lasting intermittently (1927 - 1949.	High fragmentation due to the civil war (1954-1975) ending with the unification of communist North Vietnam and democratic South Vietnam in 1975 with victory for the North.
Uncertainty-avoiding (uncritical)	Low to Moderate due to a long history of international trade and interactions with foreigners.	High due to the past geographical division between its numerous tribes and the current education system focusing on 'thinking inside the box' under communist rule.
Suspicion-oriented	Low to Moderate due to low frequency of occupations by overseas forces.	High due to a long history of foreign domination including both from Asia (China) and from the West (France) while immigrant entrepreneurship experience of the Vietnamese was limited.

Stability-seeking	Low to Moderate due to the unmodified Confucian value of 'success' in China which focuses both on yin (internal) and yang (external) implementation.	High due to the long history of Confucianism modified to a colonised territory focusing on respecting internal social order (yin).
Total effect	*Promotes both vertical (family, close acquaintance) and horizontal (further common characteristics) network with a focus on family pride and more innovative businesses.*	*Promotes a vertical (family, close acquaintance) network with a focus on stability and less innovative businesses.*

Table 2.5.1: Comparison between Chinese and Vietnamese neo-Confucianism (Author's Own)

2.5.7 The Potential Impact of FUSS upon Cultural Values during Immigrant Entrepreneurship

This thesis focuses on Vietnam due to its distinct nature in connection with the combined effects of history, culture, politics, and socio-economic modernisation in shaping the opportunity sensemaking process of a Vietnamese individual (Grosse, 2015). This section has identified the aspect of Vietnamese neo-Confucianism that potentially exerts influence on the sensemaking of a typical Vietnamese individual during international immigration. It began with an overall picture of Vietnam history since its establishment in the seventeenth century BC and the wet rice cultivation tradition of Vietnam during pre-Confucianism (or pre-domination by the Han Chinese and the period of Chinese domination). This part was followed by a brief review on the French Indochina period preceding the coup d'état by the Viet Minh (North Vietnam Communist force) in 1945. The Vietnam war between North Vietnam and South Vietnam was also discussed, ending

with more recent socio-economic developments of the one-party state under the rule of the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP).

These fusions of the complex social, historical, and political dimensions have created a Vietnam with mixed 'communist, Confucian, and western' characteristics or Vietnamese neo-Confucianism. As a final remark, this section suggests that the neo-Confucian FUSS values of the Vietnamese remain influential despite their location of residency (i.e., isolating themselves from new cultural influences). The context of Vietnam, however, is sufficiently complicated to allow traditions and culture to be occasionally confused by its own people making Vietnamese perspectives to be in some ways different from those of other cultures. As a result, there are avenues for research on the sensemaking of opportunity amongst the Vietnamese communities across the globe that can increase the clarity of immigrant entrepreneurship research.

The research focuses on a detailed examination of the lived experience of a sample of nine (9) Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK during their sensemaking of entrepreneurial opportunities. This work introduces the neo-Confucian form of Vietnamese culture that has mainly been influenced by political and socio-economic shocks under communist rule since the fall of Saigon (Democratic South Vietnam) in 1975. The sample of entrepreneurs in this thesis consists of recent Vietnamese immigrants in the UK who may have spent a significant amount of time in Vietnam after this traumatic event (during childhood or adolescence) and then migrated to the UK through various migration

schemes. These programmes include, for example, family reunions, work sponsorship, illegal border crossings or even human trafficking.

Cohen's (2009) typology of diasporas identifies four broad categories of diaspora, 'victim', 'labour and imperial', 'trade and business' and 'deterritorialised'. Following Baldassar et al.'s (2017) classification of the Vietnamese diaspora in Australia as a victim or refugee diaspora based on Cohen's (2009) typology of a refugee diaspora, this thesis defines the Vietnamese diaspora in London as a victim diaspora due to its differences in community social class and intra-diaspora identity politics of the boat people following the fall of Saigon in 1975 and recent arrivals, typically from Northern Vietnam and Vietnamese international students who remain in the UK after their studies. The 'victim' type presumes '*the idea of dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland, to two or more foreign destinations*' (Cohen, 2009, 2). These boat people are seen as a '*historical social cohort*' (Nunn 2013), who share *'collective identity in response to traumatic or formative events (wars, civil conflicts, and other disasters)*' (Eyerman and Turner, 1998, 96). In fact, the generational consciousness, when forged by a significant traumatic event such as the fall of Saigon in 1975, can *'overcome and transcend the barriers of social class to produce a powerful, solidaristic force in social relationships*' (Eyerman and Turner, 1998, 103). The shared experience of anti-communism can create a unified community and shared identity despite heterogeneity by class, gender and other differences (Thomas 1999a, 1999b), at least in the early years of settlement (Baldassara et al., 2017). In the original Confucian teaching, harmony was achieved by building one's self-respect and that by paying respect to others, one gives dignity (Hofstede & Bond, 1993, p.107). In daily

interactions, Confucian values stress the interests of the community such as family, group, the whole society and individual interests should only follow. As such, Confucian tradition strongly recommends against losing one's temper and that moderation is encouraged in all things (Hofstede & Bond 1993, p.107).

The most significant contribution of this section to research on immigrant entrepreneurship is that the FUSS as a set of neo-Confucian Vietnamese cultures is a hinder to international cultural adaptation of the Vietnamese in a foreign setting. Since Vietnam's history was relatively tied to China over its one thousand years of Chinese domination between 111 BC and 1427 AD, the culture of Vietnam has primarily been influenced by Confucianism. In addition, the long-standing cultural impacts from decades trading with the West (1787-1887) and French Indochina (1887-1954) that shaped the mind of the modern-day Vietnamese are also difficult to ignore. The birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnamese Government or Viet Minh) in 1945 as the only state in Southeast Asia run by the working class (i.e., the majority of the less-educated population consisting of toiling workers and farmers) through their various coups and uprisings (or revolutions) and the period of a divided Vietnam (21 years of North-South division caused by the civil war between 1954 and 1975) created cultural discrepancies in terms of stereotypes of behaviour and attitude among the people of these two regions. This period was followed by the post-war sufferings of many hundreds of thousands of former South Vietnamese civil officers and their families who were forced to flee Vietnam to the US, Canada, Australia and the UK after 'the fall of Saigon' (the capital of the Democratic of South Vietnam between 1954-1975) to the Communist

North in 1975. In 1986, the country witnessed major economic reforms by the communist government, and Vietnam as a one-party state has undergone a significant transformation from central planning to a socialist-oriented market economy. In 1995, the formal normalisation of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam took place. However, the power that remains in the hands of the government has caused significant wealth inequality amongst its people. This dynamic history of Vietnam has resulted in a Vietnamese culture that has currently temporarily deviated from its long-established standards explained under neo-Confucianism, which can be seen from the lack of a cohesive network and the tendency to compete with each other within a Vietnamese immigrant diaspora in many countries (Bagwell, 2018).

2.6 Part VI: Concluding remarks and proposed theoretical framework

The literature review chapter has developed a discussion about 1) the concept of entrepreneurial opportunity, 2) entrepreneurship as a process of stages, 3) the role of culture during entrepreneurial opportunity development, 4) sensemaking and confirmatory bias during opportunity development and 5) the neo-Confucian values of the Vietnamese. Throughout this chapter, an attempt has been made to suggest the importance of action as a sign of opportunity development. This realisation helps reduce the conflict in research with regard to the discovery and creation approach. As every action is preceded by cognitive processing, it is instead vital to study the transition between cognition to action compared to the conditions of a fruitful opportunity.

Therefore, it is suggested that considering entrepreneurship from the view of stages such as entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation, and opportunity implementation shows limitation, and it is essential to understand how entrepreneurs make sense of opportunities across these stages. Table 2.6.1. summarises the cognitive process of entrepreneurial opportunity to action across the stages.

The cognitive process of entrepreneurial opportunity to action				
Entrepreneurial Opportunity Process	Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)	Opportunity Recognition (OR)	Opportunity Evaluation (OE)	Opportunity Implementation (OI)
Sensemaking and Confirmatory bias perspectives	Variation (V)	Selection (S)	Retention (R)	Action (A)
Combined effects	*V is related to EI and Vietnamese culture influences this relationship*	*S is related to OR and Vietnamese culture influences this relationship*	*R is related to OE and Vietnamese culture influences this relationship*	

Table 2.6.1: The cognitive process of entrepreneurial opportunity to action (Author's Own)

A sensemaking approach means that this thesis focuses on the evolving set of favourable circumstances (representing opportunities) and how the sensemaking takes place in response to the environmental changes. The matching of the entrepreneur's knowledge structure to the changing market demands, for example, can determine the performance of the cognition-behaviour relationship. Breslin (2007) provided a

conceptualisation of sensemaking in entrepreneurship through the mechanisms of variation (V), selection (S) and retention (R). This thesis further expands these arguments considering the stages of entrepreneurial opportunity as well as the biased views of a typical Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneur during their international migration.

Variation and Entrepreneurial Intention: the entrepreneurial mind is responsible for making unique connections and associations between various events in the life of the entrepreneur and the surrounding environment in a way that new opportunities are generated by matching their existing cognitive structures to what the markets currently demand, leading to a 'variating' effort towards the old cognitive structures. For example, someone who often drives to work alone in their car for an extended period without a pay rise may find that offering an app that allows people to share their trip to work is an excellent idea. They become ready to change the importance of 'my own comfort' (existing cognitive structure) in driving their own car. They will also find that, as compared to establishing a new ordinary taxi app, the idea of car sharing is an excellent idea for helping people to save economically. This stage is more about the attitude towards engaging in the entrepreneurial journey (Kaish & Gilad, 1991; Shaver & Scott, 1991), which is related to entrepreneurial intention. In consideration of the FUSS factors, an entrepreneur may not need to go through all the cognitive stages of sensemaking for them to implement an entrepreneurial activity under the influence of a cultural factor such as fragmentation. The context of immigrant entrepreneurs such as the Vietnamese in the UK with strong fragmentation proves that 'the set of beliefs' is more influential and makes the entrepreneur more liable to bypass the entrepreneurial stages towards taking action.

Selection and Entrepreneurial Recognition: this stage employs various evaluation tools and cognitive structures related to, for example, logic, content, newness, market volume, and novelty, through the help of feedback from others (e.g., friends, family, investors). As such, it involves more of social cognition and, perhaps, culture (or, in the case of immigrant entrepreneurs, home-country culture) that has a strong influence on the decision to move forward in confirming it as a fruitful idea. For example, an entrepreneur from Vietnam in the UK may find that the lift-sharing notion is not a great idea by unconsciously employing their cognitive structure of an unsafe Vietnam to the case of the UK. Narratives are often used to confirm what they believe in their evaluation (e.g., stories shared between friends) or artefacts (e.g., in the case of a product: prototypes). This is a tricky stage because the entrepreneur has to fight back and forth between what they think and what they get from having done something for feedback from other people, and hence both cognitive and behavioural efforts are employed. This stage is more about the attitude towards engaging in the entrepreneurial action (Kaish & Gilad, 1991; Shaver & Scott, 1991), which is related to opportunity recognition. In consideration of the FUSS factors, entrepreneurs with more idiosyncratic experience may not necessarily gain a better opportunity to 'select' the right elements for more fruitful action during selecting a response to an idea. The context of immigrant entrepreneurs such as the Vietnamese in the UK with low ability to critique proves that 'the set of beliefs' is more influential and makes the entrepreneur more liable to confirmatory bias during selecting an action (or selecting sensemaking towards action).

Retention and Entrepreneurial Evaluation: this stage mostly happens during the evaluation of the idea (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), when the entrepreneur is geared up to move forward with learning new skills (if not already acquired) and linking them to new competences. In-action decisions often happen during this stage as the entrepreneur is most likely unwilling to change their thoughts about the potential of the idea that has just been through variation and selection. Many cognitive factors above the level of cognitive scripts, such as metacognition that unconsciously affects the entrepreneurs, can become influential in determining the decision during this stage. For example, cultural values such as uncertainty avoidance can unconsciously exert influence in the entrepreneur's decision to take further actions after they have become set on the idea. This stage is more about the attitude towards engaging in entrepreneurial action (Kaish & Gilad, 1991; Shaver & Scott, 1991), which is related to opportunity evaluation. In consideration of the FUSS factors, it is not necessary that an entrepreneur focuses on retaining the sensemaking before implementing action under the influence of a cultural factor such as suspicion towards other members of the same society. The context of immigrant entrepreneurs such as the Vietnamese in the UK with high suspicion proves that 'the set of beliefs' is more influential and makes the entrepreneur more liable to confirmatory bias during the transition between cognition and action (or retaining sensemaking towards an action).

Following the three stages of EI, OR, and OE, the entrepreneur may now take action to act. In consideration of the FUSS factors, an entrepreneur may only revisit the stages of sensemaking after an action effort has been made when they face some form of

(moderate to high) crisis under the influence of a cultural factor such as the tendency to remain stable. The context of immigrant entrepreneurs such as the Vietnamese in the UK with a tendency to remain stable proves that 'the set of beliefs' is more influential and makes the entrepreneur more liable to confirmatory bias once an action has been taken.

As a high level of uncertainty represents immigrant entrepreneurship, home-country values (Vietnamese perspectives) are suggested as prominent factors influencing the decision-making of an ethnic entrepreneur, especially under necessity entrepreneurship viewed through confirmatory bias in sensemaking. Here, home-country cultural values can have a considerable impact on decision-making before action, which urges research to study this transition. Overall, then, the literature review confirms that this thesis needs to consider the mechanism through which cognition is transformed into action and how home-country cultural values influence this process, which is believed to enhance understanding of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship compared to studying the entrepreneurial stages on their own.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explore the methodological approach to address the research gap (through Opportunity Framework) derived in Part II of Chapter Two. It begins with a general discussion about the paradigm, epistemology, and ontology for this research, followed by research methodology, research design, method of analysis as well as research reflexivity. In this study, I adopt the interpretive paradigm, which differentiates this study based on ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and methodology (strategies for gathering, collecting, and analysing data).

IPA is a suitable method to investigate the sensemaking of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs based on the research question 'How do Vietnamese entrepreneurs develop opportunity through their cultural lens during international migration?'. Smith et al. (2009) cited Heidegger (1962/1927) describing how IPA is appropriate to see the surface value of a phenomenon as well as the implicit meaning beyond it. The method fits with the theoretical framework from the new literature due to the process of international migration of a typical Vietnamese exhibiting high uncertainty. The suitability of using IPA is made possible by the researcher reading and re-reading the interview texts and reinterpreting their experiences and the sensemaking of these experiences in the analysis section. As this thesis seeks to answer the 'how' question during international migration, not the 'why', IPA allows examination beyond the superficial meaning (Creswell, 1998) and explores at depth the lived experience of the sensemaking of opportunity under the influence of culture.

3.1 Scientific Paradigms, Ontological and Epistemological Stances

A paradigm is considered as 'a set of assumptions about a field's object of study, method of investigation, explanatory model, and overall interpretation scheme' (Gre´goire et al., 2006, p.334). Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigmatic framework provides assumptions about the nature of society as a basis for different approaches to research in social sciences. Two continuums were proposed as radical-regulation (deep-seated structural conflict vs united/cohesive society) and objectivist-subjectivist (hard reality vs flexible interpretation of the world). For example, radical dimensions are concerned with modes of domination, emancipation, and deprivation, whereas regulation dimensions deal with status quo, social order and solidarity. Objectivism was popular in management disciplines during the twentieth century and was influenced by the growth of economics, sociology, and psychology under qualitative views. For example, the objectivist assumption views reality as real and external, which is independent of and constraining human action, hence a concrete state. Similarly, the subjectivist assumption views reality as interpreted and modified imagination of the human mind or socially constructed through personal experiences.

Past entrepreneurship studies focused on laying claims to the natural sciences through value-free knowledge, which tends to be on the continuum of the objectivist. This view can be seen in a number of studies that focused on the object of study viewing the entrepreneurial process through epistemological and ontological objectivism (e.g., new venture creation, venture capital, growth) and relevant methodological protocols (e.g.,

secondary data collection and analysis, survey research). More recently, it has become popular for scholars in social sciences to confront this approach to explaining the social world (Shapiro & Wendt, 2005). Typically, there are concerns over whether or not social research should be deduced from observable facts (the empiricist or objectivist position), people's self-understanding (interpretivist or subjectivist position), or even a convenient method through a mixed instrumentalist and deductivist position in generating effective theories. Therefore, future research tends to emanate from existing beliefs about the ontological and epistemological appreciation of a social event (Keat & Urry, 1982; Leitch et al., 2010).

Consequently, there has been a myriad of research focusing on the combinations created by the two views of positivism (objective) and interpretivism (subjective). In other words, there is an emerging inseparable tendency towards considering the ontological and epistemological foundations on which the studies are based (Amis & Silk, 2008, p.457). Fitting into this strand of argument, Venkataraman et al.'s (2012) conception of opportunities as being both objective and subjective phenomena, combined with Cunliffe's (2011) statement about the inability to adopt a mixed objective-subjective stance on such events as opportunities, have enabled this thesis to view opportunities as an intersubjectivity phenomenon. Intersubjectivity has recently been interpreted in terms of both ontology and epistemology.

On the one hand, the ontological stance on intersubjectivity suggests that opportunity is objective and independent to the entrepreneur and must be epistemologically created

through knowledge. On the other hand, when opportunities are ontologically conceived as subjective, the entrepreneur must be epistemologically alert to their capabilities, which allows them to interpret both physical and cognitive abilities, to discover them. The nature of the Vietnamese culture also requires a flexible view of opportunities. For example, if an opportunity emerges out of the cultural value of 'stability' (e.g., a Vietnamese restaurant which can be sold easily in the case of unsuccessful operations) or under 'avoidance of radical changes', as a popular line of thinking amongst Vietnamese, opportunity should be considered a hard object to be achieved through different means such as knowledge accumulation and political/social connections (epistemologically). There are cases, however, where opportunities are discovered through an interpretive effort or alertness and socially constructed. This happens amongst those immigrant entrepreneurs who are not running their business out of necessity, supported by abundant funding from their parents who are highly connected within the VCP in Vietnam. As the cultural value of 'losing face' becomes more important to these entrepreneurs, these capital-ready entrepreneurs are concerned more about how people around them, especially their own Vietnamese immigrants' diaspora, perceive what they are doing rather than focusing on ways to create an opportunity, and hence an interpretive effort. An example of this type of opportunity can be a business with a green initiative or community-based projects. The outcome of an opportunity can be similar (e.g., stable cash flow). Still, initial motives are vastly different depending on whether a person is viewing opportunity from an objective or subjective lens.

3.2 The Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Approach

There is an increasing number of research studies employing phenomenological analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of the venture formation process, e.g., learning from venture failure (Cope, 2011), gender and work-life balance (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012), or entrepreneurial performance (Tasnim et al., 2014). Smith & Semin (2004) called for a more dynamic view of cognition research, while Cornelissen and Clarke (2010) stated that individuals use 'sensemaking' through reflexivity in inductive reasoning 'to create and justify a rationale for a novel venture' (p.551). Smith and Semin (2004) suggested that socially situated cognition (SSC), which integrates social psychology and situated cognition research, can be used to explain how social objects constitute the content of thought and shape the process that underlies thought and behaviour. Gill (2014) developed a typology that classifies and contrasts five phenomenological methodologies and then generates guidelines to support researchers in selecting one type.

	Phenomenology				
	Descriptive phenomenology (Husserlian)			Interpretive phenomenology (Heideggerian)	
	Sanders's phenomenology	**Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method**	**van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology**	**Benner's interpretive phenomenology**	**Smith's interpretative phenomenological analysis**
Disciplinary origin	Organization studies	Psychology	Pedagogy	Nursing	Psychology
Methodology as	Technique	Scientific method	Poetry	Practice	Craft
Aims	To make explicit the implicit structure (or essences) and meaning of human experiences	To establish the essence of a particular phenomenon	To transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence	To articulate practical, everyday understandings and knowledge	To explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world
Participants (sampling)	3-6	At least 3	*Unspecified*	Until new informants reveal no new findings	1 or more
Key concepts	• Bracketing (*epoché*) • Eidetic reduction • Nomematic/noetic correlates	• Bracketing (*epoché*) • Eidetic reduction • Imaginative variation • Meaning units	• Depthful writing • Orientation • Thoughtfulness	• The background • Exemplars • Interpretive teams • Paradigm cases	• Double hermeneutic • Idiographic • Inductive
Applications in organization studies	Kram and Isabella (1985)	McClure and Brown (2008)	Gibson (2004)	Yakhlef and Essén (2012)	Murtagh, Lopes, and Lyons (2011)

Figure 3.2.1: A Typology of Phenomenological Methodologies (Adapted from Gill, 2014)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has become an increasingly popular qualitative approach in psychology research since it was introduced by Jonathan Smith and colleagues in the mid-1990s to complement the quantitative experimental paradigm of mainstream psychology. This method follows the tradition within the disciplines concerned with the examination of personal experience and personal accounts (Allport, 1951; James, 1890) that were previously neglected. There are similarities between IPA and discursive approaches, which were dominant qualitative approaches in the 1990s. However, IPA research is less anti-cognitivist and focuses less on core cognitive constructs like attitudes, body image, and even memory (Edwards & Potter, 1992, p.4), and instead seeks 'dialogue with mainstream psychology'. IPA's aim of establishing its position as an approach with a specific interest in cognition is achieved by the meticulous incorporation of previous strands of discursive research, including Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur (Smith & Larkin, 2009). Its approach to psychology research, which is established, systematic, and phenomenologically focused, offers an intersubjective enquiry and analysis committed to understanding the first-person perspective from a third-person position as far as possible. The situated meaning within a lived context is important, through which IPA produces an account of lived experience in its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions, which is an interpretative endeavour as humans are sense-making organisms. This is achieved by using 'free imagination' to filter incidental and essential themes (Colum and Amour, 2015). For example, it has been argued that IPA is a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain (Smith & Osborn, 2015), viewing the personal and

social as having constitutive effects on how a person makes sense of their body conditions. Furthermore, through the use of verbatim transcript data, IPA distinguishes itself from the past schools of research where close attention was paid to introspective and literary analyses (Kockelmans, 1987). This can be seen in the preferred contractions of being-in-the-world and person-in-context over the individual, making it distinctive within the prevailing social constructionist position (Langdridge, 2006; Willig, 2001). Consequently, the findings of IPA studies are typically situated in the cultural and historical context of their production. To this end, using IPA to study the perceived relation between culture and opportunity development, which previously lacked a proven direct link, becomes viable.

It can be noted that understanding the lived experiences of people and the meanings people attach to their experiences is the central focus of IPA, which requires self-reflective, freely imaginative, and self-interpretative beings both from the participants and the researcher. IPA assumes a precarious ontological status in the social world. Social reality, therefore, does not exist in any robust sense but is the product of the intersubjective experience of individuals (Morgan, 1980). This view fits with the 'in-flux' nature of culture and its iterated effects on opportunity development, where each action is performed to realise a moment of perceived fruitful opportunity as a focus in this research. In IPA research, our attempts to understand the entrepreneur's relationships to the world, especially with their own perception in connection with opportunities, are necessarily interpretative and will focus on 'their attempts to make meanings out of their activities and to the things happening to them' (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2012). It is for

this reason that the links between culture and entrepreneurial opportunity can be understood and comprehended.

IPA has three primary theoretical touchstones. First, it is derived from phenomenology with Husserl's (2001/1900) initial philosophical position to examine how experience is recorded in consciousness. For Husserl, the ultimate purpose of phenomenology is to go 'back to the items themselves' (p. 168), and the way in which objects and occurrences are subjectively experienced is investigated in the most untrammelled and untouched way by researchers' science assumptions. Second, designed with an interpretive endeavour, IPA aims to capture people's efforts to understand what is happening to them. However, it is not unusual to think that people attempt to make sense of everything that indirectly happens around them. The task of the researcher, then, is to make sense of the participant making sense of a specific internal or external event, which was previously defined in phenomenology studies as a double hermeneutic process. Finally, a distinctive hallmark of IPA is its idiography, where the main concern is the complete experience of each participant rather than the group as a whole. The number of participants, therefore, is not necessarily significant, and, through a careful and time-consuming process of analysis, researchers are able to cautiously make claims for the group as a whole through comparing and contrasting between cases. Smith (2016) suggested that experiential themes are made manifest in the sample through a nuanced analysis of convergence and divergence. Through this, IPA is not only capable of showing how participants may share overriding cognitive patterns, but also highlighting the particular ways in which those concerns reveal themselves.

There has been a growing use of IPA in entrepreneurship research. IPA is an especially useful approach for studies focused on understanding the lived experience of their participants. Google Scholar offers a very inclusive open search strategy that allows content scanning of all journals, books, and PhD theses, allowing more accurate counting of research studies using the IPA. The problem with this strategy is that researchers must be cautious when including non-relevant items. Therefore, the following steps were taken. First, the researcher performed a search combining the keywords 'interpretative phenomenological analysis' + 'entrepreneurship' which resulted in 2,180 titles as of September 2019. Second, the researcher manually scanned through the titles and abstracts to identify studies in entrepreneurship that used IPA as a method and, where possible, read through the methodology section to confirm. Finally, the researcher recorded relevant studies according to their publication date from the year 1990 (during which period the method was first introduced). This manual search required more effort but helped to ensure a more accurate illustration of the trend.

Year	IPA research in entrepreneurship
1990-2000	0
2001-2005	0
2006-2010	4
2011-2015	25
2016- Sep-2019	14

Table 3.2.1: Numbers of IPA papers on entrepreneurship recorded by Google Scholar

The development of IPA marked a new epoch in entrepreneurship research as it focused on the perception of entrepreneurs regarding their own self-evaluation, e.g., their capacity, culture, and entrepreneurial opportunity, starting with the call for 'researching entrepreneurship as lived experience' by Berglund (2007). Three other studies followed this article within the same period between 2007 and 2010 (Kempster & Cope, 2010; Tyler, 2010; Liu, 2008), paving the way for a further detailed inquiry into the entrepreneurial mind and cognition. The Google Scholar search also shows that the number of IPA studies on entrepreneurship during the next period between 2011 and 2015 flourished with 25 studies (or 58 per cent) in this search, potentially following the most cited article 'Entrepreneurial learning from failure: An interpretative phenomenological analysis' by Cope (2011) published in the top-tier *Journal of Business Venturing*. Although the IPA method is gaining momentum within the entrepreneurship domain (Berglund, 2007), the trend seems to have remained stable in recent years, as can be seen from the search table. A possible explanation is that there are several challenges with entrepreneurship research using IPA. As a phenomenological approach that usually attempts to describe experiences from the point of view of the 'experiencer', there is difficulty regarding the researcher's interpretations of the participants' experiences, preferably through the structural or thematic aspects of experience (or double hermeneutics) to go 'back to the things themselves'. As Moran (2000, p. 15) argued, 'subjectivity must be understood as inextricably involved in the process of constituting objectivity', and generalisations are usually limited to the specific groups of researchers (Sanders, 1982). Without rich qualitative accounts of the quantity of data and the quality of 'free imagination', the 'chain of connection' between what participants say and their experiences is less likely to be

obtained (Chapman and Smith, 2002), thus making the output less effective. This is similar to the case of perception of experience, as the main object of investigation becomes indistinguishable from the story of an experience (Gill, 2014). To resolve this concern, a PhD thesis is sufficiently capable of holding a considerable volume of information, which allows IPA to be fully utilised in exploring the true lived, phenomenological nature of a group of participants. In fact, since the strength of qualitative research design 'lies in its capacity to provide insights, rich details and thick descriptions' (Jack & Anderson; 2002, p.473), research can use IPA on a small group of immigrant entrepreneurs; and, with careful analysis, can provide 'theoretical insight' (Mouly & Sakaran, 2004) into entrepreneurial opportunity development.

The study explores the adaptive culture of nine (9) Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK, which is comparable with other PhD research using IPA as a method (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The sample that focused on entrepreneurs in assessing EI is also in keeping with prior studies (e.g., Barbosa et al., 2007; Dheer & Lenartowicz, 2016; Krueger et al., 2000; Liñán & Chen, 2009; Zhao et al., 2005). This thesis proposes that nine (9) participants are sufficient for a PhD project as guided by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2008). The risks associated with the theory are moderate since the model is built around popular constructs in entrepreneurship which can be easily tested with different samples in different context settings, both qualitatively & quantitatively. There are, however, risks of interview transcription as all interviews are expected to be conducted in Vietnamese, which may cause several issues with equivalent semantic meanings in English. Data collection was a challenge, as the interviewer was required to spend time with the

participants so that he could get to know them well before moving on to acquire the shared information from participants. The researcher, however, was aware of these challenges and allocated more time for bonding activities to accumulate trust before starting an interview.

3.3 Research Design

For this study, I had to adapt to the ways in which Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs respond to the nature of this research. As explained in the literature review about the tendency of the Vietnamese to be suspicious and unsupportive of others' endeavours, it was an extremely long process of contacting and receiving the agreements to set up the interviews. Most of the participants would ask the question as to why I was conducting this research. This question not only showed that they were not willing to support the project, but that they were afraid of competitors stealing their 'secret recipe' (as explained by most participants) as if I was their competitor. The major modification to the IPA steps to collect and analyse data that I had made was that I had to do two pilot interviews in order to gain familiarity with how to deal with such sensitive reactions to the research project and engage the entrepreneurs in a more collaborative state of mind. The six-stage IPA approach can be seen in *Table 3.2.1* below.

Process of analysis	Stage of analysis	Description of analysis
Pilot Interview	Pre-analysis	This is a major cornerstone for a successful IPA project upon groups having high suspicion such as the Vietnamese. Through this, familiarity with the type of individuals the researcher has to deal with and the ways they express their stories can be gained, increasing the chance of success in doing IPA.
Familiarisation and gaining insight into the cases	Reading of the cases	To gain an appreciation of the stories of the participants, the researcher uses both cognitive and affective senses to scrutinise the interviews and recall details. Memos were used and reflective notes taken on the issues identified as the cases are read.
Immersion and sensemaking	Diagnosing the case	Building on Hycner's (1985) technique, units of meaning (e.g., losing face, procrastinate to act, trust-building, competing on price and decision-making power) were identified from a case. The units were then grouped to form common clusters of meaning (e.g., mixed culture, reluctance, male-domination and denial). The clusters were firstly hand-coded and then digitally coded throughout the transcript.
Categorisation	Developing intra-case themes	Linking the holistic reflective analysis (Stage 1) with clusters of meaning (Stage 2) led to the emergence of themes that appeared salient to a particular interview in terms of conflict management approach.
Association/ pattern recognition Explanation and abstraction	Developing inter-case themes Enfolding literature	With stages 1–3 completed for all interviewees, the themes were compared between all the interview cases to identify and explain similarities and differences. Required to identify a theoretical explanation at a higher level of abstraction (Yin, 1994).

Table 3.2.1: IPA research analysis stages
Source: Adapted from Cope (2011).

Population

There had been no pre-existing political refugees from Vietnam until the day that North Vietnam captured Saigon on 30 April 1975, marking the communist victory in Indochina. The upheavals which followed this traumatic event caused more than three million Indochinese people to flee their countries over the next two decades (UNHCR, 2018). The group, consisting of approximately 120,000 people, initially fled Vietnam using ships and small boats (hence the name 'boat people'), making their dangerous passage across the East Sea (or the South China Sea) to Hong Kong and nearby Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines in an attempt to seek political asylum in a Western country. A large number of Vietnamese families from North Vietnam, despite their victory over South Vietnam, also joined this route, faking their identities as South Vietnamese people escaping communism. It was unfortunate that none of these countries would allow the Vietnamese boat people to stay permanently as they had made no prior agreement with the UNHCR to protect them. With people piling up in squalid refugee camps, these countries soon declared that they had reached the limit of their endurance, urging UNHCR to intervene. Between 1975 and 1995, it was estimated by the UNHCR that approximately 800,000 boat people had left Vietnam, among whom 19,355 people were allowed to be legally resettled in the UK under the Orderly Departure Programme. However, statistics showed that up to 24,000 refugees from Vietnam arrived in the UK during the 1970s (IOM, 2006), many of whom were Chinese Vietnamese that left Vietnam during the conflict between Vietnam and China in 1979 (Robinson & Hale, 1989), not to mention the family reunion cases which followed in

the subsequent decades. This first exodus of the Vietnamese boat people was considered a 'special' case among other groups of refugees to the UK, as asylum had been arranged under a quota programme organised by the international communities such as UNHCR before their arrival (Duke & Marshall, 1995). Policies were designed explicitly in Britain during this time to avoid the dense concentration of the Vietnamese communities due to the then government's belief that dispersion could increase integration and the communities would have access to mainstream welfare programmes (Robinson & Hale, 1989). Despite this effort of the UK government to distribute these boat people around the country, the communities soon found themselves associating with more economic opportunities in major cities such as Birmingham, Greater Manchester and Wolverhampton, and especially London and the surrounding boroughs (Jones, 1982), with the largest concentrations in Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, and Greenwich. The original boat people of Vietnam were initially being lumped together with the Han Chinese but were soon joined by another group of Vietnamese students studying bachelor and master's courses and rural Vietnamese from Northern Vietnam and their descendants during the 2000s. Many of these North Vietnam immigrants migrated to the UK via various migrant worker programmes, adoptions, and primarily through various illegal routes such as marriage by convenience and human trafficking. Some even made their hazardous journey hiding in the back of a lorry travelling across Asia and Europe into the UK, as it was the most popular destination in Europe for Vietnamese illegal immigrants as they could secure low-skilled work in Vietnamese restaurants, nail salons and the illicit cannabis industry (Nguyen, 2019). Many among this new group of Northern Vietnamese found the UK to be a less hostile environment than that of the USA, Canada,

or Australia due to the smaller concentration of South Vietnamese people in the UK fleeing the persecution of the Communist North during the 1970s and 1980s (Barber, 2015). Another explanation for this tendency amongst Northern Vietnamese people to choose the UK is that it was generally easier and safer to travel to Hong Kong (a former British colony) and seek refuge compared to those countries in South East Asia. Even today, many of these Vietnamese illegal immigrants start their journey in China or Russia, travelling through forest areas and enter the EU on foot. Some of these people, typically Northern Vietnamese, pay between £10,000 to £30,000 to smugglers to be able to join this route, as seen in the deaths of 39 Northern Vietnamese people whose bodies were found in the back of a refrigerated trailer, in which temperatures were believed to be around -25C as a way to avoid detection by temperature detector, at the port in Essex in late October 2019 (The Guardian, 2019). In 2018, some 702 Vietnamese people were referred to UK authorities as suspected victims of trafficking and modern slavery (Bulman, 2019). The report, 'Precarious Journeys: Mapping Vulnerabilities of Victims of Trafficking from Vietnam to Europe', by Anti-Slavery International, ECPAT UK and Pacific Links Foundation (ecpat.org.uk) in March 2019, found that no effective actions have been taken by the governments of countries on key trafficking routes to protect Vietnamese children from trafficking, leaving them vulnerable to continued implementation in garment factories or nail bars and severe abuse in drug production.

In 2006, community organisations in the UK estimated that there were around 55,000 Vietnamese people living in England and Wales, among whom were an estimated 20,000 undocumented migrants. The majority of Vietnamese immigrants in the UK (around

35,000) live in the capital city, making it the biggest host of Vietnamese business communities in the UK (Sims, 2007). In general, the UK Vietnamese refugee experience is characteristically different to the rest of the broader international flows of Vietnamese 'boat people' who fled communism in 1975 from South Vietnam to the US, Canada or Australia, due to the emergence of further emigration in recent years from rural Northern Vietnamese and the Vietnamese students who remain in the UK after their studies. For this reason, it is not surprising that London Vietnamese communities are 'notoriously heterogeneous, fragmented, and divided according to political ideology, refugee wave, social class, ethnicity, geographical location, and social origins' and scattered across East, North, and West London (Barber, 2018). None of the research, however, has explicitly explained the reason why the fragmentation between Vietnamese people in the UK is more active compared to that of other affluent countries. This divisive characteristic was directly related to a critical aspect of the composition of the boat people who fled to Hong Kong with the aim of reaching the UK as their final destination. During the decade following the victory of the communist government, the Vietnam economy suffered from international aid that resulted in the country not being able to internally produce its food, forcing the government to initiate the 'Doi Moi' economic reforms towards the socialist market-oriented economy. It was for this reason that there were also many other Northern Vietnamese who concealed their goal of fleeing Vietnam to Hong Kong for economic incentives and disguised themselves as people seeking political refuge from the Communist North. Instant conflicts took place in refugee camps in Hong Kong, leading to several killings between the people of the two regions, which affected their ability to bond even when they arrived in the UK afterwards. This tradition then passed down to the

second generation and also spread amongst the new immigrants from Vietnam. Although the size of the UK or London-based Vietnamese business community is mostly unknown (Bagwell, 2005), a study by Bagwell et al. (2003) estimated that over 800 Vietnamese-owned enterprises were operating in London at that time, in both local ethnic niche markets (mainly grocery shops and catering) and mainstream markets such as nail salons (manicurists). By saving hard and effectively pooling resources among family members and close-knit friends (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2009), the Vietnamese have now succeeded in developing thriving businesses in the service industry in London, such as restaurants serving Vietnamese food, nail salons and hairdressers, eventually diversifying into a wider range of activities such as bars and travel agencies.

Sample Selection

The Vietnamese entrepreneurs in this thesis were drawn from the London-based business community who had spent their life both in Vietnam and the UK and preferably with their childhood in Vietnam where the neo-Confucian values would have influenced them under communist rule. The choice of the participants mainly follows the snowball sampling method (Goodman, 1961; Naderifar et al., 2017). As the concept of travel for business may seem to be outdated in this age of 'super-connectivity', these London-based Vietnamese entrepreneurs can draw on various forms of transnational capital to further the development of their business (Bagel, 2015). This tradition involves the continuation of the neo-Confucian heritage developed back in their home country of Vietnam through continuous communication and interaction with the Vietnamese

overseas diasporas around the world and their family members and business partners in Vietnam.

3.4 Conclusions on methodology and challenges to the research process

In this chapter, a review of the research methodology of the IPA has been provided in an attempt to prove its suitability to research the entrepreneurial activities of immigrant groups. This consideration of IPA as a valid method of learning about entrepreneurship is based on the limited access to information that often occurs during research on these communities. While there are benefits of doing research on the group of Vietnamese in the UK using this particular method, there are also challenges and limitations that have impacted on the research process. This thesis approaches IPA knowing that it is impossible to discard other well-established ontological and epistemological assumptions about entrepreneurship, but urges future scholars, who are interested in phenomenology, idiography and hermeneutics, to think about using IPA to generate an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, especially what happens in the minds of people from less accessible groups in society.

With regard to the impact of employing IPA in this research and how it has impacted the research process, the major challenge was related to the literature review not limited to certain areas of entrepreneurship research. While IPA allows research to go back to the literature review and add relevant literature to reflect the research outcome, this has, to a certain extent, altered the initial purpose of this research to study the adaptive identity of

Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK rather than the impact of four cultural values on each stage of the entrepreneurial process. This, in fact, has caused a wastage in effort to review the literature and develop research frameworks related to adaptive identity. In addition, the difficulty in accessing the data amongst the Vietnamese communities in the UK due to their high level of uncertainty avoidance has resulted in this research having to alter the steps that it takes in its approach to IPA research. On the one hand, this has contributed to extending ways to perform IPA within a group of the sample represented by limited access. On the other hand, this change in the steps in performing IPA research raises the need for validation from other context settings in future research.

In general, IPA is suitable for research when considering entrepreneurship as a subjective and contextual phenomenon grounded in the entrepreneur's experience. However, viewing entrepreneurship under this lens requires further efforts in terms of drawing attention from scholars and further validation, as this tradition has to overcome the accustomed tradition of using quantitative methods that are grounded in a positivist epistemology (Suddaby, Bruton, and Si, 2015) influenced by theories in economics, psychology, and sociology (Anderson 2016). The intersubjectivist view of an opportunity that is proposed in this research enables researchers to engage in a 'powerful conduit to truth' as well as promote a valid avenue of enquiry significantly adding to the understanding of entrepreneurship consisting of cognitive and behavioural dimensions (Bachkirova and Kaufman, 2008).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of two main parts. Part I first highlights the personal background of the participants to allow a better appreciation of their idiosyncratic lived experiences. Following this information, a summary of the findings themes/scopes is provided. By reflecting on general entrepreneurship theory and the four stages of the entrepreneurial process identified in Chapter 2, the preferred form of opportunity perceived by the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs is addressed. This section is followed by a discussion on the findings of how Vietnamese culture (i.e., FUSS) influences the link between Sensemaking (V-S-R-A) and the entrepreneurial process (EI-OR-OE-OI) using interview excerpts. Part II confirms the new model for understanding the cognitive process from an entrepreneurial opportunity to action. It seeks to provide arguments on the role of a sensemaking-confirmatory bias perspective in explaining opportunity towards action.

4.1 Part I: Research Findings and Discussion

4.1.1 Participants

By adopting IPA as a method, this research relies significantly on the in-depth information provided by the participants (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) also suggested that a sample of nine (9) participants is 'reasonable' for a PhD thesis since time, reflection, and dialogue in each of the cases are maximised. The table below and the descriptions that follow provide brief background information about the nine Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs who participated in this research, including their basic demographic information, time spent in Vietnam, and how and when they migrated to the UK.

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Business commencing	Sector	Years of entrepreneurial experience
#1 AP	Male	43	Bachelor	2005	Tourism	18
#2 HT	Male	42	Bachelor	2009	Restaurant	16
#3 CV	Female	35	Bachelor	2015	Wedding Planning	4
#4 DH	Female	34	Masters	2017	Restaurant	2
#5 JB	Male	38	Bachelor	2015	Restaurant	4
#6 AT	Female	45	Masters	2015	Education	4
#7 HN	Female	48	High School	2011	Manicure	8
#8 SO	Male	31	Bachelor	2015	Real Estate	4
#9 AN	Male	33	Bachelor	2010	Restaurant	9

Table 4.1.1: Participant Demographics Information (pseudonyms and initials are used instead of their real particulars for privacy and safety).

Participant #1: AP (Travel agency)

A 43-year-old male entrepreneur born in Vietnam and emigrated to the UK about twenty years ago. He remained in the UK after his bachelor studies in Business Management during the early 2000s. He started working for a company offering printing services (books and flyers in education) as a marketing specialist. As he accumulated about £15,000 after two years doing this job, he decided to run a Vietnamese sandwich store, but it eventually failed. Through his connections with the Vietnamese community and his friends working for Vietnam Airlines (the flag carrier of Vietnam), he set up a travel agency company selling airline tickets to the Vietnamese community. He soon expanded his business, starting to operate tours across the UK and Europe, recruiting employees from Vietnam and Vietnamese students in the UK to work after their studies. His company is considered a big player in the field of tourism and immigration services for the Vietnamese community in the UK. He built this business from nothing, struggling to find every single customer as he began his journey.

Participant #2: HT (Restaurant)

HT, a 42-year-old entrepreneur, was an engineering student in the UK before he set up his first restaurant in 2000 among four other Vietnamese restaurants in London at the time. He now operates a chain of Vietnamese restaurants under three different names in London. Media in the UK consider him as one of the most prominent players in the Vietnamese restaurant market. He is an open-minded person who would love to share his stories so that people can learn more about how hardship, perseverance, and

independence helped him remain a top player in the field over the past twenty years without the support of the Vietnamese community.

Participant #3: CV (Wedding Planner)

CV was sponsored to join her father in 1990 in the UK. Her father was a boat person fleeing the Communist North during the 1980s, so they remained separated for almost five years. During that time, CV was raised in Vietnam by her mother, who, at the same time, emigrated to the UK under the same family reunion scheme. CV began her wedding planner business about three years ago in London, following her experience of working for a major retailer in Britain specialising in setting up and displaying clothing items in-store. She is well aware of the risk of having a loss or break within the first three years of starting her venture, and is geared up to expand further should opportunities arrive.

Participant #4: DH (Restaurant)

DH is a new immigrant to the UK, having arrived a few years ago and is sponsored by her husband, who is a white British person. She is 34 years old and runs a Vietnamese restaurant focusing on the traditional sandwich (banh mi) serving a wider group of customers in the UK. Unlike other Vietnamese restaurants that began by first trying to acquire Vietnamese customers from its community, DH's store targeted all sorts of customers in the UK, irrespective of nationality. She believes that the Vietnamese sandwich is a gem amongst other types of sandwiches worldwide and will be accepted by most people in the world. With the help of her husband, who is a local Londoner, she is well on her way to becoming known in London for her tasty Vietnamese sandwiches.

Participant #5: JB (Restaurant)

JB is a 38-year-old Vietnamese entrepreneur who was initially a TV reporter in Vietnam. He first emigrated to the UK to work for a major British media corporation wishing to expand their language content to include Vietnamese to serve the Vietnamese communities worldwide. After getting his indefinite leave to remain in the UK about three years ago, he started running his Korean restaurant in central London. When asked why he decided to run a Korean restaurant instead of a Vietnamese one, he explained that his wife is Korean and that they both love Korean cuisine.

Participant #6: AT (Education)

AT is a 38-year-old female entrepreneur who is originally from Southern Vietnam. She had her tertiary education in Canada in financial engineering. Upon her graduation, she started her career as a currency trader at Goldman Sach in New York. Her husband, who is also a financial engineer, was supportive of her plan to move to the UK and learn fintech from prominent professors. Her motivation was high as she feared being left behind by the fast-paced world of finance and investment, particularly the rapid development in the area of artificial intelligence. They decided to run online courses focusing on fintech in Southeast Asia, believing that the region would require a legion of skilled workers in fintech in the near future. Through this, AT will also be able to support her home country of Vietnam by upskilling students in the country through online programmes specifically designed for Vietnamese students.

Participant #7: HN (Manicurist)

HN is a female manicure store owner whose husband illegally emigrated into the UK in the back of a lorry during the 2000s. She joined him in 2010 through an unknown sponsorship programme. She now runs a manicure store in East London, employing workers from her hometown in North Vietnam, including her relatives and siblings. She believes she is doing a good deed for her hometown through her employees, as they have better job prospects in the UK. She is proud to talk about her employees sending money back home for their parents to build spacious homes. HN also owns a big house in the same area and a sleek Porsche car.

Participant #8: SO (Commercial Real Estate)

SO is a 31-year-old entrepreneur who was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam. He is currently co-running his co-working space business in London, which emerged out of his interior design project (Project A) as an intern in 2011 at a well-known co-working space in Shoreditch. He gained a Graduate Diploma in Interior Design at the University of the Arts London, but soon discovered his interest in providing shared working spaces for technology start-ups and relevant services for other enterprises. Before that, he studied Interior Design in Vietnam at the University of Architecture in Saigon. He is now working on a full-time basis as a CEO with one of his friends from Hanoi, who also studied in London. Managing the business with his friend from Vietnam means that he continually engages in discussions with a Vietnamese person directly and the business is guided by Vietnamese cultural values.

Participant #9: AN (Restaurant)

AN is a 33-year-old Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneur who emigrated to the UK when he was 18 years old, obtaining his Bachelor of Arts in Information Technology at the University of East London. During this time, he was working part-time at a local Vietnamese restaurant (believed to be owned by Participant #2). After AP graduated from university, he felt that he had accumulated enough experience of running a restaurant and persuaded his parents in Vietnam to sell one of their properties to fund his project. He then created a new Vietnamese restaurant in East London. His younger brother, who is 28 years old, soon joined him after he graduated from the same university and set up his bubble-tea store next door. AP aims to achieve both profits and days of presence in the UK so that he can then apply to become a permanent resident of the UK (indefinite leave to remain).

4.1.2 Summary of findings: the four major themes

Although the analysis of IPA data is mainly based on emerging themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008), the supplementary account will be constructed in a more deductive way to provide systematic responses to the research question and research objectives. As a result, the findings and discussion will be grounded on the emanated themes viewed as fundamental to the research question and the research objectives by the researcher, demonstrated by the interview transcripts with exact quotes (Howitt, 2010).

As an IPA researcher, I performed all the data transcription, translation, and analysis intending to familiarise myself with the participants' narratives and their perspectives. Doing this job by myself has helped me effectively with developing emergent themes. The Vietnamese language was used across the interviews, and the translation contains some unidiomatic uses of the English language. As a result, it is not surprising that Non-Vietnamese readers find several sentences and combinations of words challenging to read. However, as an IPA researcher studying the culture of Vietnamese people in the UK, I must primarily work with the transcript in its original language (Vietnamese) and occasionally consult the English translation. Here, I will rely more on the Vietnamese transcript to grasp the meaning and insight of the participants. Still, it is occasionally necessary to study English translation because some Vietnamese individuals living abroad may mix their linguistic thinking using both Vietnamese and English ways of expressing themselves (perhaps due to issues associated with acculturalisation).

I used a Microsoft Word document with three columns, 'Emergent themes, Original Transcript, and Exploratory comments' to visualise my data after three rounds of manual coding in a notebook. Prevalent codes were made clear on the direct quotes with the aid of software on each participant as well as across the data sources before major themes were to be identified from further repeated reviews of each participant's transcripts and reflective journals. The insight from each of the participants' experiences has allowed me to achieve a better interpretation of the linguistic aspects and meanings of their sentiments, followed by the identification of similar codes across all the participants. In the end, the four most important themes (as mentioned above) emerged consistently

across all nine cases in connection with the research question concerning opportunity development via action. The four major themes unearthed from the IPA of the lived experiences of nine Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs, based on their transcribed interviews, are elaborated below. The thematic descriptions are supported by contextual information such as interview excerpts and the participants' body language during the interviews.

The themes include: *(Theme #1) The easy leap across the cognitive stages towards action; (Theme #2) The importance of evaluation of a situation; (Theme #3) The ease of smooth transition; and (Theme #4) Stability as the chief goal during entrepreneurship*. Here, the author was not driven by any preconceived concepts or constructs during the process of inductive analysis. At the same time, the literature review section was induced based on the results of the IPA. It is essential to note that cognitive processing has been illustrated in the sensemaking literature to take place in three stages, namely *Variation*, *Selection*, and *Retention* before an *Entrepreneurial Action* takes place. The transition between this cognitive processing and action requires a person to overcome *inaction decision*. However, this research indicates that there are several ways through which one can make a leap from a particular cognitive stage towards action bypassing the rest of the stages under the influence of cultural values (i.e., FUSS).

Details for the four themes are as follows:

- Theme #1 is related to the stage of entrepreneurial intention (EI). It is analysed based on 1) the entrepreneur's self-perception of possessing distinctive

characteristics to their Vietnamese peers and relevant Vietnamese competitors, 2) the entrepreneur's tendency to stop their peers from taking action involving the same opportunity so that they can ultimately surpass or move beyond their peers in terms of life achievements, and 3) unfair competition amongst the Vietnamese community after their core products or services have been established. Considered under sensemaking, from Variation, a person can skip through taking action when high fragmentation occurs between the actor and the source causing this variation (extrinsic factor).

- Theme #2 is related to the stage of opportunity recognition (OR). The phenomenon in this theme can be illustrated through the fruitful actions as a result of the entrepreneurs using their experience alongside 1) an extensive period of engaging in the second sensemaking stage of evaluation, and 2) a willingness to innovate. In contrast, those individuals who 3) use their experience under a high sense of confidence (or being less critical of their past success) often need corrective actions to fix the issues. Considered under sensemaking, from Selection, a person can skip through taking action when the tendency to remain uncritical dominates their cognitive processing (intrinsic factor).
- Theme #3 is related to the stage of opportunity evaluation (OE). It identifies that the transition between retaining cognitive processing and action is often smooth in the case of the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London due to the suspicion that exists amongst the members of the same society. Considered under sensemaking, from Retention, a person can skip through taking action when

high suspicion-orientation occurs between the actor and the source causing this retention (extrinsic factor).

- Theme #4 is related to entrepreneurial action (EA). The finding in this theme suggests that the revision of cognitive processing will not take place until (moderate to high) crisis takes place after action, having been realised due to the tendency amongst Vietnamese people to favour (family and finance) stability. Considered under sensemaking, from Action, a person will not tend to skip through taking action when the tendency to remain stable dominates their cognitive processing (intrinsic factor).

4.1.3 Defining Vietnamese immigrants' entrepreneurial opportunities

The ultimate purpose of doing entrepreneurship amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs is to attain and maintain the value of stability. Besides, fruitful opportunities in the view of the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs require a lower level of innovation due to a long period of exposure to being uncritical and suspicion oriented. Combining the three values, it becomes understandable that the majority of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK choose to do business in the tertiary service sector. Opportunities are perceived out of long-term stability with a moderate level of innovation required. This tendency to remain stable becomes more prevalent amongst entrepreneurs with a higher number of years of entrepreneurial experience and with family commitments. The rationale behind this is that these entrepreneurs need a steady income to make sure their families are safe and secure in times of difficulty. This tendency is potentially biased and caused by a perception of being unsupportive within

the Vietnamese community represented by the fragmentation value. In the same vein, the preference for stability is in some ways related to the family-focused tenet in Confucianism. For example, participant #5 provides that:

> *You know what I do all this for? For my family. I am reaching the last stage of my life and there is nothing more important and meaningful than creating a good foundation for my children' future . All the hardship in Vietnam has taught me this lesson: do what you are certain about and do what you have done well.*
> *[Participant #5]*

Several studies have impinged on the value of family stability amongst immigrants (e.g., Yoon, 1995: Korean immigrants in the US; Brzozowski, Cucculelli, & Surdej, 2017: transnational entrepreneurs in Italy). For example, Grant (2010) examined the specific experience of immigrants in the US. The author identified that several pressures such as vulnerability in the labour market, the role of males and females within a family, and the social status disjunction influence the way that these immigrants redefine their kin obligations and obligation in the family. This thesis, similarly, suggests that small-scale businesses in the tertiary service sector are often the preferred choice of Vietnamese immigrants in London so that they can more effectively secure a stable life for their family. This is to maintain the cohesion and interdependence among family members.

4.1.4 Sensemaking (V-S-R), Culture (F.U.S.S) and Entrepreneurial opportunity stages (EI-OR-OE-OI)

The section below analyses the four themes in detail using interview excerpts across the nine cases of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK. Discussion on the link between sensemaking and a staged approach to entrepreneurship research is also provided with cultural influence considered.

4.1.4.1 Variation-Culture-Entrepreneurial Intention (V-FUSS-EI)

This theme investigates the link between sensemaking and the entrepreneurial process amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs as being influenced by culture. The theoretical framework has suggested that variation (i.e., sensemaking) is associated with entrepreneurial intention (i.e., entrepreneurial process). This research finds that the link becomes less stable under the influence of the value of fragmentation (i.e., culture) demonstrated through the shift in the entrepreneurial stage from entrepreneurial intention towards action skipping entrepreneurial recognition and entrepreneurial evaluation amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

The neo-Confucian value of *fragmentation* has been identified throughout the interviews to be the most impactful factor during the stage of variation, driving actions that move opportunities forward amongst the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK without fully engaging in opportunity recognition and evaluation. Considered under VSR, variation occurs when new opportunities are initiated based on an entrepreneur's cognitive frameworks or prototypes (Breslin, 2017; Kaish & Gilad, 1991). Across the nine

cases, an intention to start a business seemed to have developed at the sensemaking stage of variation without the participation or contribution of another Vietnamese business partner, potentially due to the cognitive prototype of *fragmentation*. The *fragmentation* that moves a Vietnamese entrepreneur from having an idea towards action as soon as an intention is formed and opportunity made sense of can be seen through **1)** their self-perception of possessing distinctive characteristics to their Vietnamese peers and relevant Vietnamese competitors, **2)** reducing the chances of their peers recognising the same opportunity so that they can surpass or move beyond their peers in terms of life achievements. Furthermore, this phenomenon also includes **3)** unfair competition amongst the Vietnamese community after their core products or services have been established. During the first sensemaking stage of *variation*, the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs seemed to rely excessively on their idiosyncratic cultural value of *fragmentation* that was previously exposed to them while they were in Vietnam.

To illustrate the self-perception of possessing **distinctive characteristics** to their Vietnamese peers as a primary motive to drive the leap between forming an intention to entrepreneurship towards taking action on it, when asked why participant #8 decided to run a business instead of working for someone else in the field that they studied at university, they responded as follows:

> *Well, I think it depends on whether or not you think your university degree is a useful one. For me, I found myself fortunate enough to have had found something I liked much earlier than my university classmates who are still struggling with what they truly like at the moment. The Asian cuisine in the early 2000s in London was still a very infant business. There was not much investment in the UK. The opportunity originated from my missing home actually when I kept asking myself this question every day: 'Today, I miss the taste of home-cooked rice so badly, what should I do?' This was the motive for me to pursue to the end to make Vietnamese cuisine more*

widely available here for not just me but also my friends to enjoy too. And this was done without much thinking about it, I just did it.
[Participant #8]

The *fragmentation* that drives actions can also be seen through the fear that their peers would be in a more timely position to seize the opportunity before the entrepreneur is able to do so. Entrepreneurial intention is formed here without a direction on what entrepreneurial tasks to perform following it. This happens similarly in the case of participant #1, who describes how they take action about an opportunity as soon as they can, even when this sort of opportunity has never been fully researched:

I realised that my time was coming. At that time, there were several of my friends in some random chats predicting that the travel service market would strongly develop in the coming years and they intended to start a small airlines ticket service for the Vietnamese community in London. My parents had just given me some spare capital from selling their house in Vietnam, I quickly started thinking about building a multi-service-oriented business model and this thinking did not take long as I started building a name straight away. I thought I would just do it otherwise I would not be able to compete with others.
[Participant #1]

Also, participant #3 offers the following view on their alertness to opportunities based on the need of their friends, and their friends' inaction/decisions as a hint on the unfair competition at the early stage of opportunity development:

Few people offer all-in-one wedding services like me. They often focus on doing each separate service to their best. For example, one can specialise in the food to serve at the wedding ceremony, or invitation card printing and decoration etc... and I saw my friends going crazy wishing for an all-in-one bundle at one time before her wedding in the past. I think, why not develop everything in parallel so that customers do not have to go wasting their time and effort to search for so many wedding services by different providers?
[Participant #3]

Compared with the Vietnamese immigrant communities in America and Australia , where the fragmentation is lower due to the higher solidity (i.e., due to a high tendency to counter communism being boat people who escaped Northern army forces after 1975), the Vietnamese in the UK display a higher perceptual pluralistic ignorance of the shared values of their society to the extent that they often consider themselves to be better than others, which ultimately increases their unwillingness to collaborate in a business setting (D'Andrade, 2008). Perceptual pluralistic ignorance occurs as one or more members of a society agree on the prevailing social norm, while the individuals do not pay attention to the possibility of an error associated with the norm (Mendes et al., 2017). This higher level of pluralistic ignorance can be seen as an explanation as to why entrepreneurs tend to be motivated to leap from sensemaking variation towards action, seeing that their friends also realise the fragmentation and would potentially take action on it. In other words, if an entrepreneur believes that their friends also see the opportunity and understand the intra-group fragmentation, this entrepreneur might think that their friend would soon do something about it; and, as a result, the entrepreneur would form an intention to do it faster to stop their friends from doing it. When the entrepreneur does this, they form an intention to entrepreneurship, wanting to demonstrate that they are not copying the idea.

To further illustrate this tendency across the nine cases, there are frequent uses of the word *fortunate* to indicate their differences to the rest of the community and how swift action was able to help them achieve the fruitful business outcome. The *fragmentation*, here, remains an unconscious force driving the behaviour of the entrepreneurs during the

entrepreneurial process, and being fortunate is often used as an excuse to hide this fragmentation when the entrepreneurs think about their entrepreneurial journey. Most entrepreneurs amongst the nine cases consider themselves to be superior to the rest of the community, while at the same time make an excuse for using other people's ideas, in a subtle way. An example is shown in the case of participant #7 as follows:

> *I saw some of my friends who wanted to do manual labour for a living at the time, but initially criticised the hazardous working conditions in nail salons. In fact, they refused to look into it carefully, the manicure was not as hard as they had thought. They were hesitant, worried to make an investment. Luckily, I had a friend who opened a nail salon in Denmark and I asked him right away about the difficulties and preparation. Then I thought I had to do it straight away, and I had to do it fast because if I waited for too long, my friends would potentially blame me for doing the same type of business as theirs. That's why I had to do it before they did so my friend would not blame me later.*
> *[Participant #7]*

This tendency to pursue opportunities where 'others see and do not take actions' (participant #6) is pervasive amongst the Vietnamese community in London. There are variations of this attitude ranging from competing on price, doing it fast to avoid negative comments about stealing someone else's idea, to copying the whole restaurant menu to use in a new restaurant, as seen among the nine cases in this study. This tendency to take action on other people's inaction also happened in the hi-tech industry with participant #6:

> *There are a lot of opportunities out there but the important thing is that you will take it or not. If you let it go it may be gone forever. My friends in my fintech class back in the UK saw opportunities and told me about it but they procrastinated to take actions. I was not like them, that is why I can run a hi-tech educational platform for the South East Asia market now and some of my friends, who used to see the same thing studying in the same class, are working for me. It's more about the risk-taking*

> *attitude, all or nothing, you know so. There is a fine line between an entrepreneur and working for someone else you know, and you have to know that line to cross when necessary*.
> *[Participant #6]*

While social networks provide possibilities for individuals to refine their cognitive frameworks, pointing at more productive social cognitive frameworks (Kim & Baylor, 2006), this tendency of being fragmented can also lead to a case where unfair competition such as prolonged price-based strategy exists between the Vietnamese immigrant community for a seemingly unclear reason, as pointed out by Bagwell (2018), and can be seen through the experience of participant #1 when they came up with a new business idea, as follows:

> *After running my company for three years, it was fortunate that I had been able to attract the attention of many business partners of my competitors at the time, and the good thing was that these companies were willing to cooperate with me because I would offer them higher profit, through exchanging new business ideas over a few beers. So they would certainly become more profitable as well. I also had many exclusive terms and conditions to ensure they felt I treated them like a VIP partner. These partners were also able to divert many clients of their former partners to me, and with lower charges, the customers were happy to switch, so I simply decided to run a new line of service. This is why my service is number one in this community because the way I treat my business partners is special.*
> [Participant #1]

Overall, then, fragmentation has been found to dominate the first step of the variation of the VSR and the entrepreneurial intention of the entrepreneurial process, encouraging Vietnamese entrepreneurs to bypass further opportunity assessment that urges action. On reflection of the theoretical framework proposed in this research, it can be seen that it is not unusual for Vietnamese immigrants in the UK to take a leap between opportunity intention towards taking action under the influence of cultural value such as

fragmentation. This finding confirms the theoretical framework in terms of the flow of sensemaking and the entrepreneurial process, but does not seem to support the order of the sensemaking and the entrepreneurial stages under an immigrant context. This section generally agrees with the literature that the topic of opportunity recognition is empirically underdeveloped and considered primarily as 'an ancillary issue by many authors and academic journals' (George et al., 2016, p.309) due to issues such as neo-Confucianism that deeply ingrains the mind of the immigrant entrepreneurs. The next section provides findings on the stage of selection within VSR and the dominant neo-Confucian factor of uncritical judgement during it.

4.1.4.2 Selection-Culture-Opportunity Recognition (S-FUSS-OR)

This theme investigates the link between sensemaking and the entrepreneurial process amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs as being influenced by culture. The theoretical framework has suggested that selection (i.e., sensemaking) is associated with opportunity recognition (i.e., entrepreneurial process). This research finds that the link becomes less stable under the influence of the value of uncritical (i.e., culture) demonstrated through engaging in repeated actions when facing a resistance without going back to entrepreneurial intention or moving through entrepreneurial evaluation amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

Entrepreneurship goes alongside innovation. The positive impact of innovation on the overall company performance has been well documented in the literature (Kuckertz & Kohtamaki, 2010). The ability to employ effective critical thinking to increase the level of innovation in business has been proven in some research on entrepreneurship and EE

(Kirby, 2004; Shoop & Ressler, 2011). Innovation is often defined in entrepreneurship as initiatives to include new products, new processes, new services. For example, innovation can range from the basic exploitation and creation of well-established products, processes and services to more advanced forms of new organisation formation, market expansion, and new skills and human capital to cater for these new products, processes and services (Crumpton, 2012; Zhao, 2005). Innovation is a multidimensional and intricate concept applied to every aspect of a business, even expanding to the creation of new wealth or the enhancement or alteration of existing resources to create new wealth (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004).

The above answer to the question of innovation raises the need to enquire about the entrepreneur's understanding of the level of innovation in general and whether they have done a reasonable amount of consideration when recognising an opportunity. To many people, the integration of additional services to serve the base of existing customers can be an initiative; but, as participant #1 stated during the interview, the fact that they are the best (number 1) within the Vietnamese community in delivering tourism services, the action to introduce another service can be less innovative than how they actually perceive it. Here, the uncritical tendency of neo-Confucianism of the Vietnamese is found in the form of insufficient comparing and contrasting between oneself and their direct and indirect competitors, despite their claim to have 'done a lot of research' (participant #1) as they moved on to provide that 'As long as you do better, as you see I am the number one in this market, nothing can stop you if you understand the market.' It can be argued that the participant could be correct when stating that expanding a product based on

existing customers can be an advantage, but without even mentioning their competitors during this section of the conversation may imply the fact that there was insufficient consideration made towards potential threats in the market. As a result, participant #1 later moved on with:

> *…but you know, doing a start-up is not easy, you have to do it again and again and again… I then found that there were people who copied my idea and offered the same, and it also affected my market share, but it was ok in the end because I changed some marketing strategies*.
> *[Participant #1]*

In contrast to the above statement, this section first identifies that entrepreneurs who use their experience alongside an extensive period of engaging in the second sensemaking stage of evaluation can gain more innovative actions. For example, participant #6 responds when asked about her fintech products, as follows:

> *I had experience trading the foreign exchange markets and it was good fun, but fintech does not stop at the foreign exchange platforms, but also those that support the business to grow both from the backstage and the frontline. After a number of days mulling over the idea of what to be a focus on the curriculum for students in South East Asia, I decided to focus on the frontline products because in South East Asia there are booming economies that will require apps and platforms to support start-up businesses, and it was quite a great decision I think.*
> *[Participant #6]*

Similarly, this research also finds that entrepreneurs who use their experience alongside the willingness to innovate can gain more innovative actions. For example, participant #7 responds when asked about new designs for her manicure services as follows:

> *I am on Facebook every day after work to remain connected with my friends and family back home in Vietnam and one day I found some of my friends sharing their new nail designs made by some nail salons in Vietnam. I suddenly had an idea of running a Facebook group to discuss matters related to the manicure and share new designs. After several weeks thinking about whether or not I would have time to take care of the group, I asked my daughter to support me with monitoring the group members for spam posts to maintain the quality of the discussions. Because of this Facebook group, I am now more well-known in the Vietnamese community here for providing new manicure ideas.*
> *[Participant #7]*

In addition to participant #7 above, this theme also explores the effect of excessive self-satisfaction. This is applicable to entrepreneurs who use their experience under a high sense of confidence (or being less critical of their past success) and often result in corrective actions to fix the issues. The phenomenon can be seen through most cases within the nine entrepreneurs in this study, but mostly amongst those who claim to be a successful entrepreneur within the Vietnamese community such as participant #1. Below is the extract in the interview with participant #1 related to innovation:

> *Yes [pause] I have done a lot of research and come up with innovations in terms of products and services for the Vietnamese community. I will shortly offer the express delivery services for parcels and documents for my customers, which is sending personal items back and forth between Vietnam and the UK. To the Vietnamese community, this is a new service, a new trend that people need. I have existing clients and these days they send goods back home a lot with their higher income.*
> *[Participant #1]*

Here, it can be seen that participant #1 is also inclined to self-satisfaction that blurs the various competitive possibilities during evaluation based on previous successes (Foo, Poh Kam Wong, & Ong, 2005). Foo et al. (2005) examined emotions that influence the perception of success based on previous successes and proposes that these feelings

reinforce the entrepreneur's confidence about their ventures, highlighting the complex effects in the feedback loops among emotions, cognition, and intentions. Emotion includes 'the effect, emotions, moods, and/or feelings – of individuals or a collective – that are antecedent to, concurrent with, and/or a consequence of, the entrepreneurial process' (Cardon, Foo, Shepherd, & Wiklund, 2012), especially during the evaluation stage (Foo, 2008). This can be seen clearly in a follow-up question where participant #1 responded in a confident voice:

> *I did not have any worries about my new service. Because I already had customers who buy airline tickets, I just needed to run this new service. When asked about why they decided to expand the new line of service (UK-Vietnam parcel delivery). It was also a new product, a new service, I was thinking I would advertise it to my existing customers and I could then easily gain market share.*
> *[Participant #1]*

The self-satisfaction found in the case of participant #1 may be further explained under the widely accepted definition of success in Vietnamese society. In research by Benzing, Chu, and Callanan (2005), it was found that entrepreneurs in Southern Vietnam are more motivated to establish a business for personal growth and satisfaction as opposed to those individuals from Northern Vietnam, whose aim in doing business is often to provide jobs for family members, which can be seen in the case of participant #9. Participant #1 tends to achieve success for self-satisfaction, while, for participant #9, the perceptions of their own success are illustrated through their willingness to help poor boys and girls from Vietnam who are not their family members. The major challenge observable in their entrepreneurial story is the matter of attribution of 'doing good deeds' during opportunity evaluations, which is related to the ability to criticise a phenomenon. For example, in the

case of participant #7 who runs the nail bar, when asked about where to look for employees if everyone around her was hesitant about starting this business, an uncritical response from them included a common idiom in Vietnam of 'money can buy God' (or, commonly known in English as 'money makes the mare go'). They saw the lure of the manicure sector and cannabis farms in the UK, which saw an increase in the number of young Vietnamese people smuggled into the UK to serve in these industries, among whom were several boys and girls who were even forced into prostitution. In this case, participant #7 had no problem with recruiting and exploiting other Vietnamese smuggled into the UK because they believed that such employment helps both parties. For participant #7, their business can take advantage of this cheap labour to become more lucrative while these youngsters have 'a place to stay and to earn money for themselves and their families'. In other words, on the question of whether the participant would consider employing such a boy or girl, the argument on possible employment was sophisticated and surprisingly liable to a fallacy, as they thought the action was a good deed without too many consequences. The phenomenon is illustrated in their description as follows:

> *I don't know if I should talk about this, it seems very dangerous to talk about this, politics and religion [pause], I don't know, but I think the 2016 Ha Tinh marine life disaster caused by Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Corp backed by the government has been very problematic, for fishermen and people whose livelihood, production and jobs were taken away and badly and they could not strike, you know there were cracks-down on protesters seeking compensation, so this very badly affected the people and the marine habitats, and these people borrowed money to go to the UK to look for jobs. I know some nail bars take these young people, I can do the same to save them so they have money to send back home to those affected families. As long as you don't do cannabis, it will be no problem at all.*
> *[Participant #7]*

The above excerpt has swayed this research to identify a novel and interesting finding of the stage of selection during VSR. With a moderate level of courage to go 'out of the box' permeated by the tradition to avoid talking about politics, participant #7 has been able to identify the best time to hire these young people. This thesis does not necessarily support this course of action by participant #7. Still, since it was then confirmed that this strategy 'works all the time' during the interview, the finding here is further expanded towards the situation where breaking the convention can help Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs recognise opportunities that involve higher risks.

4.1.4.3 Retention-Culture-Opportunity Evaluation (R-FUSS-OE)

This theme investigates the link between sensemaking and the entrepreneurial process amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs as being influenced by culture. The theoretical framework has suggested that retention (e.i., sensemaking) is associated with opportunity evaluation (i.e., entrepreneurial process). This research finds that link becomes less stable under the influence of the value of suspicion-oriented (i.e., culture) demonstrated through smooth transitions that take place between opportunity evaluation and entrepreneurial action due to the high level of suspicion towards other people's comments amongst the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

The tendency amongst the Vietnamese community to promptly act when facing opposing comments from members of the same society is common. For example, when participant #9 was asked as to why they decided to run a restaurant instead of running a tech firm, they responded as follows:

> *Although I studied information technology and I did a lot of projects related to website designs in university, I had to decide at the time between running a restaurant and running a website design company. The reason was that I saw a lot of my friends who are also Vietnamese having this intention to run a website design company. The economy of Vietnam was booming when I graduated and I had a lot of opportunities to offer website design services to Vietnamese. However, I then thought I was not good at working with Vietnamese people even here in the UK. I thought that running a restaurant could be better because I would only need to mainly remain connected to my chefs and staff and everybody needs feeding, no matter how bad or good the economy was. I hesitated to decide what was the better choice. One day my family said that they would not support me financially if I ran a restaurant, partly because they believe I would do technology better, and this was the reason why I started this small restaurant business with my savings to show that I could do it.*
> *[Participant #9]*

In the above example, when participant #9 felt that they were not able to decide, they were facing a typical moment of inaction decision. However, the opposing advice given by their family gave them the impetus to drive their action in starting the restaurant business. Opposing words of advice, combined with the feeling of suspicion towards members of the same society, is identified in this research to result in this phenomenon. participant #9 goes on to explain further:

> *I knew that they wanted good things to happen to me but they had never been abroad and they worked for state corporations all their life in Vietnam. I trust that I was more alert to opportunities in the UK than them. Although they had more life experience, in some aspect it might only apply to Vietnam where they want a stable life. I also thought that I knew myself much more than them. There was a secret that they did not know, which was that I did not feel that I chose the right programme to study at university. I should have gone for business studies or hospitality and business, if there was.*
> *[Participant #9]*

Similarly, participant #6 suggests that they view themselves as 'different to the rest of the society' and believe that what they do must be different to what their friend believes,

and that they always see the other side of an issue. When asked about this further, they explained:

> *One day, the whole company was surprised by the bad attitude from one of the female employees that had been with my company from day one. I worked with her particularly on the content of our website at that time and found good qualities in her. I believe she fits well with the education settings due to her hard work, strong attention to details and a strict rule follower. What happened during a meeting was that she suddenly behaved impolitely by angrily slamming her fist on the table showing her disagreement. There were also other occasions where she showed her unwillingness to cooperate with her team members. Supervisors from Marketing, Sales, and Customer Services who are also Vietnamese suggested that I need to warn her about her bad attitude and fire her if possible. I then thought the opposite, seeing the good things that she has contributed and decided to learn about her situation. It did not take me so long to not let her go and, in the end, fix her problems from the root.*
> *[Participant #6]*

The above excerpt provides evidence that, when being provided with a solution or suggestion by members of the Vietnamese society, Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs tend to act suspiciously towards it and, if there is inaction decision, this can be easily skipped through. Here, the entrepreneurs are less likely to fully engage in the opportunity evaluation which precedes implementation.

4.1.4.4 Action-Culture-Opportunity Implementation (A-FUSS-OI)

This theme investigates the link between sensemaking and the entrepreneurial process amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs as being influenced by culture. The theoretical framework has suggested that an entrepreneur will move back to variation (i.e., sensemaking) and entrepreneurial intention (i.e., entrepreneurial process) once entrepreneurial action has taken place. This research finds that this tendency becomes

less stable under the influence of the value of stability-seeking (i.e., culture) demonstrated by the fact that this phenomenon will not take place until (moderate to high) crisis happens based on the tendency amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs to favour (family and finance) stability.

The principal aspect of this theme is concerned with what makes the Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK reassess their action under a new cognition-behaviour loop. The finding suggests that a Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneur only revisits the stage of sensemaking after an action has been taken when they face some form of (moderate to high) crisis under the influence of a cultural factor, such as the tendency to remain stable. For example, participant #7 suggests that *'Everything was fine until something happened that changed what I thought about opportunity.'*

Similarly, participant #5 also describes his experience as follows:

> *At first, my restaurant did not specialise in Korean food, because… although my wife is Korean and she is a good cook, it did not mean that she could be the head chef. So I decided to recruit an experienced Korean chef living in the UK. After six months, I found that everything was under control. But I also wanted my customers to experience Vietnamese dishes and requested the chef to prepare Vietnamese dishes as well, even though I knew it was not necessary. Some time later, I received complaints on the taste of a few Vietnamese dishes to be not original. I still persisted that the Korean chef did not follow the recipe I'd provided him with . After two months, the chef was very upset and quit, then I hired another Korean chef and have remained focusing on Korean dishes since then.*
> *[Participant #5]*

The neo-Confucian aspect of *stability* of the Vietnamese is illustrated mostly across all cases when questioned about their plans for the business. The plan involves

entrepreneurs assessing the viability and future potential of ideas, or sets of ideas (Hill & Birkinshaw, 2010). The responses cover two areas of stability, 1) the effects of new products on family stability (financial and emotional), and 2) excessively relying on past success for assessing new ideas (either innovative or non-innovative).

This tendency to create a family cohesion is also strongly applicable in the cases of the Vietnamese participants #2, #5 and #7 in this thesis. As described by participant #5 below, family activities are also merged with doing business to save time in bonding activities in the family:

> *When I offer a new kind of food to customers, what I think first is of course whether or not the market would love it. However, if you ask about other things to consider, I would say it's family time. What the impact is on my family time, I must find out, whether we (family members), yeah, can do it together or I will spend time on my own. On one occasion in the past, I asked my kid to try the new dish before we started to offer it to customers. Maybe my kid had never tried the dish, but he seemed to enjoy the activity a lot. I want my children to know how much I love them when they grow older and think about the past, so getting him involved is also good, saving my time for bonding activities.*
> *[Participant #5]*

An answer to the factors driving Vietnamese entrepreneurs to think about family when evaluating new opportunities can be tricky. However, from the conversations with the nine participants, it can be seen that Vietnamese entrepreneurs experience a high level of uncertainty avoidance, which is also described by past literature using Hofstede's framework (Swierczek & Ha, 2003). This tendency to avoid uncertainty has inevitably led the Vietnamese to become less prepared in taking a proactive stance on deciding whether to spend time on the business or family and, over time, causing the two activities to overlap. Research into cognitive science has identified the self-other distinction that assists in understanding others' mental and affective states (Steinbeis, 2016), and this

thesis suggests that such a level is low for the group of Vietnamese participants, demonstrating that most entrepreneurs think their family members will also enjoy working towards a common goal in business, which can replace the ordinary family bonding activities. This tendency, perhaps, is a by-product of a long period of the Vietnamese associating themselves with their family, their village, and under communist rule: the economic reform, stories and propaganda of the victory of the communist over democratic South Vietnam that each Vietnamese individual is exposed to on a daily basis in Vietnam.

This biased cognitive state may potentially affect one's ability to differentiate between past success and future success when evaluating an opportunity. When asked about future plans, Vietnamese entrepreneurs who possess significant relevant knowledge may spend a relatively small amount of time evaluating opportunities before they start exploiting the idea of whether it is seemingly similar to their past well-established service or products, ignoring the new context settings. For example, participant #9 believes that:

> *I used to make the best dipping fish sauce in my family back in Vietnam. I have also had my Caucasian British friends at university try it when I brought Vietnamese food to their parties and they loved it. I have been using the same recipe since I opened my restaurant. When I decided to expand one of my dishes last year, I simply used it, and it economically saved costs and I was more certain of a good reaction from my customers.*
> *[Participant #9]*

4.1.4.5 Reflection on the general theory of entrepreneurship

This chapter provides an overview of the experiences of the nine Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs. It reveals their idiosyncratic characteristics and perspectives as members of an ethnic immigrant diaspora in the UK. Additionally, thematic findings were developed based on the analysis of data and reflective journal entries. The themes include Theme #1: The easy leap across the cognitive stages towards action; Theme #2: The importance of evaluation of a situation; Theme #3: The ease of smooth transition; and Theme #4: Stability as the chief goal during entrepreneurship.

The Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs who participated in this research, faced with being both a foreigner in the Western world and a Vietnamese person, shared the idiosyncratic experience of striving to gain success and stability in the new environment. Success was defined under two categories of stable cash flow and job creation for their family members. During this process, all nine participants had taken a number of corrective actions to adapt themselves to the new way of doing business, as well as continuously improving the skills required for their business. Through their narratives, the participants were able to provide unfiltered accounts of how they navigate their opportunity pursuit through their cultural lens. With their liability of newness serving as the most prominent contextual factor, the entrepreneurs in this study expressed their sense-making of opportunity as though they were continually experiencing uncertainty. This perception, conjoined with feelings of suspicion, has resulted in a constant need to keep their 'secret' (e.g., ingredients, suppliers) to themselves and their family members,

inhibiting their ability to expand rapidly under some standardisation process. As a result, they felt the need to work as hard as their counterparts, including locals and other Vietnamese immigrants, for fear of being left behind in the entrepreneurial race (competition). In addition, by being subject to a fragmented Vietnamese community, the participants in this study discussed how they tend to adopt characteristics that are related to the victory of the Communist North over South Vietnam and, to a certain extent, the USA, during the Vietnam war, as well as stories that are prominently used by the communist government in present times to promote their business (through posters and the communist flag that is hung inside some restaurants). This is explained by the FUSS values that made them unable to distinguish between the love for the country (as a patriot) and their favour towards communism. Overall, then, the findings are able to identify the independent effects of these cultural values on the cognition and action during opportunity development.

During entrepreneurial intention, inaction decision is common for nascent entrepreneurs, and research considers it a 'deliberate decision not to pursue a perceived opportunity' (Wood et al., 2017). Research on entrepreneurial action theory (Edelman & Renko, 2010; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006) has identified that important consequences may flow from entrepreneurial inaction decisions, although little research has been done on the perception of inaction decision within a network acting as an impetus to opportunity development. The finding in this research, however, agrees with the literature in a way that inaction decisions negatively impact their judged or deliberate likelihood of engaging in subsequent entrepreneurial actions. This can be seen by the fact that the friends of

these entrepreneurs never took action about the opportunities while they seemed to actively participate in discussing the ideas. The findings, however, add a novel consideration to the research that noticing others' inaction decision can arouse the tendency to take action about it, especially in a competitive environment. This competitive environment may not necessarily be in the form of pressure as a result of competitors who are about to gain additional market shares, but also as a result of self-fragmentation within a group of friendly relationships.

Regarding the culture literature, these three perspectives coincide with the conclusions drawn by Masurel, Nijkamp, Tastan, and Vindigni (2002) on fragmented ethnic groups that tend to operate in isolated niches supported by informal business activities. These activities amongst the Vietnamese people are often in the form of conversations about life and the welfare of their families. These researchers have also identified that this form of socio-cultural configuration tends to encourage a Kerznerian entrepreneurial spirit, such as creating a business from scratch based on the entrepreneur's perception of an innovation that emerged from changes in the environment (e.g., technology, demography, and regulations). This perception differentiates these Vietnamese entrepreneurs from other people, causing them to become more alert to opportunities that carry less collaboration between Vietnamese people within a community, making them distinguished among their peers. A possible explanation for these results may be the existence of alertness that involves a process of proactively positioning oneself in the right place to exploit market information (Kaish and Gilad, 1991). In other words, the Vietnamese entrepreneurs prefer to act on an opportunity that they believe other

Vietnamese immigrants also know about but never do anything about, giving them a sense of superiority, although not necessarily being recognised by others, over their peers (e.g., 'products they wanted but they never did anything about them'). Although this finding is contrary to previous studies, which have suggested that opportunity recognition is perceived when unfulfilled market need meets with a solution that satisfies the need following exploration of new ways to organise such a demand (Bhave, 1994; O'connor & Rice, 2001), this perception of inaction decisions by other people (that causes opportunities to be recognised) is worth highlighting, potentially being influenced by the long-traditional pattern of thinking that carries values of fragmentation.

During opportunity recognition, this finding confirms that, with some 'out of the box' thinking during the stage of selection, this can lead to more innovative opportunity realisation. This is also a novel finding for entrepreneurship research since most research suggests that out of the box thinking works on the creativity and innovation of business, but little research has indicated the way or the stage at which this is most effective. This can be explained through the discovery that cognitive effort is greatest during the selection of cognitive frameworks in order to solve a problem, such as a new idea for a business. Once the entrepreneurs are able to adapt to this level of effort, it subsequently works as 'small wins' and turns these efforts into a form of motivation moving actions further towards success.

In general, the tendency to not criticise a phenomenon is manifested through the biased perception of innovation and the self-satisfaction that inhibits the entrepreneurs' capacity

to compare and contrast between various direct and indirect players in their field during the evaluation of opportunity. This can be seen through the push towards actions based on either these perceptions of their success. With a moderate level of cognitive framework employment when 'out of the box' thinking is employed, the outcome is most effective. The next section will provide an analysis of the cultural factor of suspicion towards members of the same society before action is actually initiated.

During opportunity evaluation, the finding in this theme agrees with the literature in that there is impetus and conflict that move or stop one from having an intention to act towards action. However, this research suggests that there are cultural values, such as 'suspicion' towards the same members of the society, that offer a greater chance of turning cognitive processing into action. Reflecting on the literature on general entrepreneurship, the finding also suggests that one's intention to proceed alongside the entrepreneurial process can be intimidating when facing critical comments by one's acquaintances, which contrasts with the literature. Overall, the suspicion-oriented nature of the Vietnamese community in London has been analysed in this theme to increase the participants' likelihood of taking action, despite receiving negative comments from their acquaintances. This finding has provided a novel contribution to research on cognitive processing before action (i.e., EI) and general entrepreneurship literature in terms of negative comments during opportunity recognition.

During opportunity implementation, as Vietnamese immigrants come from a background with a strong desire for stability, it is for this reason that, after the action

stage, often there is a strong desire for inaction decisions. Since stability seeking is the most visible and important value to the Vietnamese people, this finding has contributed to research in a way that shows the role of a certain aspect of culture (i.e., cultural value) during opportunity development. In other words, there are, in fact, important cultural values that more dominantly influence opportunity development than others. This finding is twofold. On the one hand, it confirms the indirect link between culture and entrepreneurship in a way that not all cultural values exert a strong influence on the development of opportunity through behaviour. On the other hand, this association becomes direct when considering several cultural values on their own. This is a novel contribution to research, suggesting a further investigation into individual values of the culture that might be important in certain context settings. In general, the Vietnamese entrepreneurs in London throughout the interviews have exhibited the unsurprising tendency to avoid changes and engage with uncertainty to create opportunities. These entrepreneurs prefer both a stable outcome and family commitment at the same time, and instead follow what is described in this thesis as opportunity discovery, on a small-scale level.

4.2 Part II: New Model for Understanding the Cognitive Process from Entrepreneurial Opportunity to Action

Based on the research findings, this model highlights the role of the Sensemaking-Confirmatory Bias (SCB) perspective in explaining the Cognitive Process from Entrepreneurial Opportunity to Action.

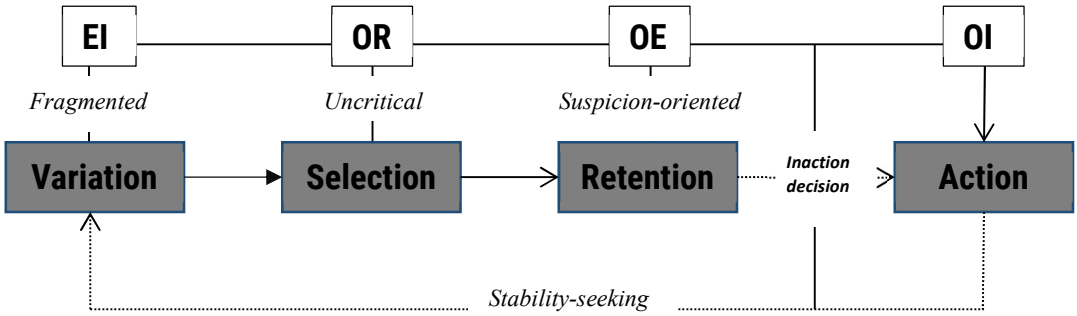


Figure 4.2.1: Cognitive processing leading to action by Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK (Author's Own)

The opportunity phenomenon has been identified to be discovered through alertness or by surprise (or opportunity discovery) as well as via a deliberate effort to disrupt a market (or opportunity creation) (Davidsson, 2015; Short et al., 2010). An SCB approach will involve interpreting the cognition and actions of the individuals along the entrepreneurial process under intrinsic and extrinsic factors (i.e., Vietnamese FUSS in this research) to understand how the entrepreneurs make sense of opportunities based on four core perspectives, which are inspired by the SCB properties proposed by Weick (1995) as follows:

(1) In what way do Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs 'variate' their entrepreneurial intention?

This question is particularly relevant to the stage of entrepreneurial intention, which is the start of the entrepreneurial process as proposed in this thesis. An SCB approach to research means that we can predict the tendency of Vietnamese immigrant

entrepreneurs to make sense of opportunity as they are placed in a situation exhibited by competition amongst their own society members or high fragmentation. Under the influence of this factor and all the FUSS combined, Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in forming an intention to do business if the factor of 'fragmentation' becomes prominent.

(2) How do Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs 'select' their environmental cues in recognition of an opportunity?

This question is particularly relevant to the stage of entrepreneurial recognition, which is the second stage of the entrepreneurial process as proposed in this thesis. An SCB approach to research means that we can predict the tendency of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs to become less focused on cues that require a certain level of critical thinking as they are not well equipped with this skill. Under the influence of this factor and all the FUSS combined, Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to recognise opportunities in the tertiary service sector if the factor of 'uncritical' becomes prominent.

(3) How is an identity of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs 'retained' during opportunity evaluation?

This question is particularly relevant to the stage of entrepreneurial evaluation, which is the third stage of the entrepreneurial process as proposed in this thesis. An SCB approach to research means that we can predict the tendency of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs to retain a certain level of conservation towards other cultures within

British society due to their suspicion towards other individuals/cultures. Under the influence of this factor and all the FUSS combined, Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to remain with their 'selected' opportunities if the factor of 'suspicion-oriented' becomes prominent.

(4) How do Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs reinstate the opportunity through retrospection once action has been realised?

This question is particularly relevant to the stage of entrepreneurial action, which is the final stage of the entrepreneurial process as proposed in this thesis. An SCB approach to research means that we can predict the tendency of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs to become inactive in starting another loop of the entrepreneurial process once action has been taken due to their preference to remain stable. Under the influence of this factor and all the FUSS combined, Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs are more likely to remain with their action until some form of moderate to high crisis takes place in their business if the factor of 'suspicion-oriented' becomes prominent.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Contributions to knowledge

The research question of this study concerns the sensemaking of opportunity under the influence of a cultural perspective amongst the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK. Specifically, 'How do Vietnamese entrepreneurs develop opportunity through their cultural lens during international migration?' There are significant contributions to the theory in this thesis in relation to 1) the conceptualisation of opportunity 2) the link between culture and entrepreneurship, 3) evolution theory in entrepreneurship research and 4) theory on education for immigrant entrepreneurs.

First, this thesis contributes to knowledge by proposing that opportunity is both created and discovered. Opportunity is identified by four variations: Innovation-opportunity focus, Arbitrage-opportunity focus, Opportunity creation (behaviour-oriented), and Opportunity discovery (behaviour-oriented). As the ontological debate on opportunity creation and discovery – or, more specifically, whether entrepreneurial opportunities are best promoted as objective artefacts or subjectively driven 'realities' – will not meaningfully contribute to moving research forward (Wood et al., 2012), the intersubjectivist view of an opportunity that is proposed in this research enables researchers to engage in a 'powerful conduit to truth' as well as promote a valid avenue of enquiry significantly adding to the understanding of entrepreneurship consisting of cognitive and behavioural dimensions (Bachkirova and Kaufman, 2008).

Second, this research enhances the theoretical grounding of the link between culture and entrepreneurship (Efrat, 2014; Stephan & Pathak, 2016) by confirming that culture only affects entrepreneurship indirectly. In other words, cultural values such as the neo-Confucian FUSS can act as a barrier to transform cognitive efforts into action depending on the stage of the sensemaking. By drawing on the transition between cognition and behaviour, emphasising their intertwined nature in constituting opportunity, the study highlights the need to consider a combination of multiple anticipatory and adaptive cognitive stages and subsequent behaviours, which is repeated endlessly (Aldrich & Kenworthy, 1999) in assessing opportunity during the entrepreneurial process considered through a sensemaking lens. Action has been found to result in actions, enabling the opportunity development process more efficiently. Through this, a more comprehensive picture of the entrepreneurial process is delineated. The role of both time- and space-related constructs (environmental conditions, knowledge structure, individual beliefs, and time) is highlighted to raise academic awareness in this 'transformative process by which desires become goals, actions, and systemic outcomes' (McMullen & Dimov, 2013, p.1482).

Third, evolution has increasingly become a central concept in social science in general, and also in entrepreneurship research (Breslin 2008; Stam 2010). Evolution is made possible through the three generic processes of VSR (Aldrich 1999; Van de Ven and Poole 1995). Recently, Kerr and Coviello (2020) have attempted to weave network theory into effectuation through a multi-level reconceptualisation of effectual dynamics (individual cognitive, dyadic relationship, entrepreneurial network, and market) and suggest that

future research needs to enquire into the VSR loops that operate within and across all levels. This call urges research to build upon the micro- and macro-level perspectives emphasised in evolutionary theory surrounding entrepreneurship. Specifically, the authors raise the question of how the VSR works in the case of actors in an effectual process when engaged in a co-creating and shaping process of their environments, cognition and behaviours. The findings in this thesis are in line with this call for research and suggest that culture influences every stage of the VSR, even when an action has been taken. However, this thesis further suggests that, for the communities of Vietnamese immigrants in the UK, culture can independently shape the VSR without being co-created or reshaped. This thesis adds evidence to the evolution literature that micro-level factors (FUSS) are formed based on the macro-level home-country culture (neo-Confucianism) and are maintained throughout a VSR process in a distal geographical location, highlighting the temporal aspects of the VSR in entrepreneurship in general and in social science in particular. This thesis, thus, agrees with Lippmann & Aldrich's (2014) argument that the evolutionary mechanisms of the VSR may provide a systematic basis for understanding the often-unusual nature of historical processes, including history, significant events and the entrepreneurial essence of individual cases, such as the case of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

Finally, this thesis also highlights the importance of settlement education and entrepreneurship training for immigrant entrepreneurs prior to and after their arrival in the UK with the help of organisations such as the British Council and associations formed by the Vietnamese community in the UK. To improve the general level of entrepreneurship,

educators are advised to avoid taking a causal approach to EE, and instead to engage immigrants in an experiential process over a period of time through which repetition and experimentation 'increase an entrepreneur's confidence in certain actions and improve the content of her/his stock of knowledge' (Minniti & Bygrave, 2001, p.7). To take advantage of the Vietnamese immigrants' perseverance, time should be given during the education or adaptation process, allowing them to absorb and stabilise their propensity and take action towards business start-ups (Pham, 2018). The practical experience gained from entrepreneurial activities over the provision of education, despite only being approximate and small to the real British market, may assist immigrants to test the veracity of their interests and discover their true abilities in entrepreneurship. Vietnamese immigrants may benefit from pedagogies that focus on actions and cross-cultural case studies to guide them through a multi-functional implementation process (Liñán, 2007) – or, better still, to set up a mini-business throughout the course (Rodrigues et al., 2012). Here, the emphasis is on enabling mindset development (Ilozor et al., 2006); for example, creative problem solving (Camacho et al., 2016) and behavioural training games (Johnsson et al., 2016), which can potentially lead to a systematic improvement in a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship over time (Jones et al., 2017; Maas & Jones, 2015). As well as this, developments of valid quantitative measures to be uni-dimensional and applicable across a broad range of contexts for traditional frameworks, such as effectuation and entrepreneurial bricolage (Davidsson et al., 2017), signal an opportunity for research to promote an entrepreneurial mindset among students and student engagement within a wider societal context.

5.2 Implications for Practice

Research in policy responses to immigrant entrepreneurship has identified the need to integrate a 'mixed embeddedness' approach (Kloosterman & Rath, 2000) to ethnic entrepreneurship, focusing on direct and indirect regulatory factors and the relevant level of enforcement shaping entrepreneurial behaviour in different context settings such as Ethiopian and Bolivian immigrants in the US (Price and Chacko, 2009), immigrants from non-industrialised countries in the Netherlands (Kloosterman & Rath, 2002) and Vietnamese immigrants in London (Bagwell, 2018). The influence of the home and host country contexts on entrepreneurial strategies and outcomes is presented through 1) the abstract embeddedness maintained by local socioeconomic and political institutions, and 2) concrete embeddedness achieved using their social networking (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001, p.190). As such, this study considers both macro-policy and micro-policy responses to ethnic entrepreneurs among the Vietnamese in London. The section below explores further the two categories based on the findings from participants in this study.

5.2.1 Macro policies: Recommendations for home and host country's policymakers

Macro policies include immigration and taxation policies that shape the ethnic entrepreneurship contours in the UK (Collins, 2002). For example, one can be eligible to apply for a Tier 1 Investor visa if they make an investment of GBP 2,000,000 or more in the UK as of 2019 (UKBA website, 2019). This required amount of investment is far beyond that of other affluent countries such as Canada (ranging between CAD 100,000

to 500,000 depending on the destination and type of investment) and Australia (AUD 1.5 million into a new start-up or Australian business that is already operating). However, the average number of applicants under the UK's Tier 1 Investor Visa in recent years for all nationalities has remained stable at between 200 and 350 each year (UK Home Office, 2019), showing the restricted representation of the wider immigrant business community. Throughout the interviews, the Vietnamese communities in the UK, on the one hand, have demonstrated their tendency to invest in less capital-intensive projects that require more labour commitment and physical work such as a restaurant, a nail salon and a travel agency. On the other hand, there appears to be an insufficient understanding of the laws enforced by both the UK and Vietnam governments.

One aspect of the macro policy that may directly influence this type of business is the Working Time Regulations in the UK, which state that one cannot work more than an average of 48 hours a week. However, many ethnic immigrant entrepreneurs are willing to work long hours outside of basic working hours, especially at weekends serving breakfast and beverages when traditional bakers are closed. This by-law can create a market niche for immigrant entrepreneurs who are willing to work on Saturdays and Sundays. However, this type of business cannot merely be encouraged in London, like in other European cities such as Paris or Rome (Collins, 2002). In London, people may not be able to enjoy pleasant al fresco summer dining on swathes of pavement as 'a cab will pass, burping a fine film of particulates over their salad' (Hayward, 2009). This example demonstrates that the enforcement of by-laws at government level, such as in the extended working hours, needs to be combined with alterations by municipal government

(e.g., pedestrian area during the weekend that allows dining on the footpath) in order to allow a weekend 'cafe society'. Therefore, different levels of the UK government need to work together to sketch a more supportive plan enabling entrepreneurial opportunities amongst various groups of immigrants such as the Vietnamese. At the same time, it is essential that information is widely available to immigrant entrepreneurs, perhaps through the coordinated creation of cross-fertilisation networks, by interfacing nascent entrepreneurs with both internal and external serial business owners (Kariv, Menzies, Brenner, & Filion, 2009). Through this, the community can effectively disseminate ways and means to employ competitive expertise of their home countries and use these to create a competitive edge for their businesses.

Alternatively, the rebirth of an era of a new entrepreneurial class following a generation of communist rule has raised questions related to cultural inertia and the adoption of Western civilisation in a non-capitalist context in recent history. One prominent issue that discourages the integration of Vietnamese immigrants into mainstream British society is the lack of effective communication between relevant British governmental bodies and the Vietnamese community. The lack of understanding of the genealogy of the Vietnamese community (Silverstone, 2010) is identified on several occasions when public policies are not strictly complied with by the Vietnamese community in the UK, such as the smuggling or trafficking of children to serve in cannabis plantations and various forms of money laundering activities (Silverstone and Savage, 2010). Although these activities occasionally take place amongst the Vietnamese community in the UK, especially along the lines of kinship (Pearson & Hobbs, 2001), it has been found that

Vietnamese immigrant societies have not devoted enough effort into running educational campaigns to make their community aware of the detrimental consequences of the violation of local laws. This can be explained through the fragmentation and the tendency to seek stability and the prevention of acts of retaliation by Vietnamese gangs towards themselves and their family members in Vietnam. In the UK, cannabis factories are predominantly run by illegal Vietnamese immigrants from Northern Vietnam who are called 'nguoi rom' (or, in English: strawmen) by the wider legal Vietnamese community; and it was estimated by Drugscope UK, an independent centre of expertise on drugs, that 'two thirds to three quarters' of this cannabis cultivation was controlled by these Vietnamese illegal immigrants (Daly, 2007). Among several explanations relating to economic incentives, these Vietnamese immigrants in the UK may potentially be influenced by their experience of how the Vietnamese government deals with overseas criminals (Silverstone, 2010), e.g., in the recent incident of 39 people found dead in the back of a refrigerated lorry on an industrial estate in Grays, Essex, in the south of England in late 2019. Specifically, even though the UK National Crime Agency has identified these bodies to be Vietnamese nationals, the Vietnamese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Trần Ngọc An, refused to comment on this possibility, but instead mentioned being 'mentally prepared for the worst scenario' (VietnamInsider, 2019). This lack of a collaborative attitude is common for the government of a country whose corrupt police officers account for the majority of the Ministry's police force (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Vietnam, 2001). Vietnam, indeed, under communist rule, is known for its high corruption, the complexity of red tape, and lack of bureaucratic transparency (Thayer, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2018). This situation has inevitably led to the

slow reaction to traumatic events by governmental bodies that may affect the 'face' of this country in the communist era.

As drug entrepreneurship is facilitated through friendship and kinship, there are cases of Northern Vietnamese individuals studying and working in the former communist countries such as the Czech Republic isolating themselves from the host country's administrative systems, which ultimately leads to criminal stigmatisation of Vietnamese diasporas as a whole (Nožina, 2009). Unlike the Vietnamese community in the UK, which is fragmented, the shared demographic (northern) and political (communist) background has allowed the new 'modus operandi' of criminal activities to happen (Nožina, 2009), as well as the unity of the legal and underworld spheres. As law enforcement efforts within the criminal economies such as cannabis cultivation and drug smuggling towards certain minority crime groups may create opportunities for other minority groups in terms of upward mobility (O'Kane, 2003; Friman, 2004), it is unwise to focus predominantly on preventing these activities amongst the Vietnamese community. Instead, supportive settlement policies can be considered.

British culture has been found to be less influential in the way Vietnamese entrepreneurs see themselves in recognising, evaluating and implementing their business ideas, perhaps due to their limited ability to integrate into mainstream societies. Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK experience language barriers and limited understanding of the British culture and British society, as is partly found in other ethnic groups in the UK. In this sense, the UK government may consider supportive settlement policies for the

broader groups of ethnic immigrants, as in the case of Australia during the first three decades of immigrant settlement after 1945. The policy of 'assimilation' in Australia during this post-1945 period meant that new immigrant minorities were not provided with the necessary resources in terms of education, health, law, and social welfare, leading many immigrants to start up their own businesses (Collins et al., 1995). Soon afterwards, Australia's Adult Migrant Education Programme was established by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. Migrants or refugees can now register within six months of their visa commencement date or date of arrival in Australia to improve their English language for working in Australia, as well as learn skills and Australian culture to prepare for life in Australia. To this end, policy-makers may consider providing them with training programmes about the importance of foreign networks, before and when they arrive. For example, the British Council in Vietnam has recently funded entrepreneurship training programmes at various universities in Hanoi and Saigon delivered by professors from the University of Leeds to Vietnamese students. These programmes aim at equipping students with the entrepreneurial skills to transform their ideas into successful businesses. Similarly, the UK government may consider working with the British Council in Vietnam to create programmes that focus on introducing the British culture, business environment and English language skills to potential immigrants to the UK, allowing them time to absorb information and turn it to their own competitive advantage and get them ready to move into mainstream British society as they arrive.

5.2.2 Micro policies: Recommendations for Vietnamese Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Micro policies include specific initiatives introduced by the government to support new businesses that directly have an influence on immigrant entrepreneurs. This work highlights one significant area drawn out of the sample of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London, which is *the internal education and training for immigrant entrepreneurs*. Similar to the Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK, many immigrants in other affluent countries such as the US, Australia and Canada maintain their ties with their homeland as they integrate into the social and economic mainstream of their host countries. The research by Kariv, Menzies, Brenner, and Filion, (2009) also identified that, amongst the groups of Chinese, Vietnamese, Italian, Indian/Sikh and Jewish entrepreneurs from Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, the Vietnamese tend to maintain the most active links with businesses and family in Vietnam, demonstrated through more frequent visits to their homeland. Prior studies have presented the Vietnamese as both remittance transferors and receivers, further confirming this strong interaction between Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs and their homeland (Bagwell, 2006; Kariv, Menzies, Brenner, & Filion, 2009). Therefore, the Vietnamese in the UK should engage in the transnational networking that involves parties from both the home and the host countries. Such stable and enduring networks can lead to increased business performance.

Inappropriate or inadequate education and training act as an initial barrier to the move into entrepreneurship for immigrant entrepreneurs – particularly for women (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994; Kermond et al., 1991). Based on the principles of Schumpeter's economic

disequilibrium and the Austrian School of Economics (opportunity creation vs opportunity discovery), Dana (2001) suggested that education and training allow entrepreneurs from transitional Asian countries to operate small businesses effectively by focusing on maintaining both entrepreneurial and managerial skills and the transformation of minds over generations. This system of vocational education, however, has been found informally through on-the-job training by mentors in organised Asian clan associations and ethnic networks. For example, the literature has explored Chinese entrepreneurs in Mississippi (Loewen, 1971) and Korean networks in Atlanta (Min & Jaret, 1985) through which asymmetric information and necessary skills are passed from successful to nascent entrepreneurs unrelated by blood (for a detailed literature review, see Light (1972) and Dana et al. (2000)). In the case of a fragmented network diaspora such as the Vietnamese studied in this research, the context of an overseas network diaspora in the UK is comparable to that of another South-East Asian country which has also been built by people of various cultural backgrounds under the past influence of the British Empire. The country is Singapore, which is populated by Malays, Tamils and various ethnic Chinese sojourners who originate from different provinces of China. During the early stage of its development under British colonisation, the group of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore, who, to some extent, shared similar characteristics with the Vietnamese as per the fundamental neo-Confucian values, were identified to have no long-term commitment to the British economy, as in the case of all nine Vietnamese participants in this study in terms of commitment to the UK economy in general, but instead gain more immediate income from their investments (Dana, 2001). For this reason, these Chinese-Singaporean entrepreneurs often avoided capital-intensive

projects and were more attracted to commerce and services. The success of Chinese entrepreneurs in Singapore is undeniable. It can be seen from as early as Singapore's success in trade and commerce based on a pool of initial immigrants from mainland China in the nineteenth century, and the second-generation entrepreneurs that followed who were able to embrace the values of resilience, hard work and active diaspora network development (Lee, J., and Chan, J., 1998).

In general, when immigrants are forced to uproot from their home country, the primary motivation is to fundamentally earn a decent livelihood (Chan & Chiang, 1994). This spirit of maintaining a stable and prosperous life has created a managerial development model that has depended on domestic and foreign managers in Singapore during the twentieth century. Since the issue of Singapore's Report of the Economic Committee in 1986, a shift to private entrepreneurship as the engine of growth has been realised, charting new directions to revitalise the Singapore economy. Since then, the focus has been on the promotion of a high need for achievement, interpersonal competence, and perseverance and determination in overcoming obstacles amongst the second-generation Chinese entrepreneurs (Lee & Chan, 1998). In Low Kim Cheng's (2006) study on cultural obstacles in growing entrepreneurship in Singapore, the author identified that cultural barriers such as being over-compliant, too left-brained, overpampered, and a fear of failing, are what discourage the setting-up of businesses among Chinese Singaporeans. Here, it is essential to note that none of these factors seems to have a direct association with a fragmented network, as opposed to what is found amongst Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK. In fact, one of the significant differences between a Vietnamese network and a

Chinese network is the issue of fragmentation found within the former. The Vietnamese community in the UK can establish organisations that focus specifically on bonding activities and developing knowledge and skills that allow them to more efficiently offer service-related products and gain more immediately, as found in the cases of participant #1 (travel agency) and participant #7 (manicurist).

Currently, the issue with most associations in the UK, ranging from student associations to the Vietnamese entrepreneurs' networks, is that they are not entirely free from the influence of the Communist Party of Vietnam. For example, although the Vietnamese Association in the UK (VAUK) claims to be a non-profit, non-political, independent and self-maintained organisation representing the Vietnamese people studying and living in the UK (UKVA.org, 2019), the organisational structure follows that of a Vietnamese governmental office with an executive committee (Vietnamese: 'ban chấp hành') resembling the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (Vietnamese: 'Ban Chấp hành Trung ương Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam'), which is the highest authority elected by the Party National Congresses. In order to deal with the fragmentation within the Vietnamese entrepreneur communities in the UK, a pure non-profit and non-political organisation connecting various entrepreneurs both from Northern Vietnam and Southern Vietnam is recommended, as in the case of the co-ordinated governmental sculpting of modern Singapore, positively affecting business environments in this international hub through a successful demographic transition that adapts to the fast-changing global environment. In fact, through non-political and pure knowledge transfer activities, fostered co-operation amongst the Vietnamese community

can be maintained, providing new-generation entrepreneurs with social contacts, business ideas, market information, technical and capital-related assistance as in the case of outsourcing amongst people sharing the same dialect. Fragmentation and unfair competition can, as a result, be gradually eliminated.

5.3 Contribution to the IPA Methodology

An interpretative phenomenological approach to analysis has allowed this research to explore the authentic experience of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK and highlighted the participants' sensemaking of culture as it related to their entrepreneurial opportunity pursuit. The ideographical components of IPA allowed the author to gather detailed accounts of each participant's interpretation of their own entrepreneurial and personal life, both intertwined to create a unique set of perceptions amongst various immigrant communities in the UK. Throughout this research, the author has identified areas that are useful for future studies, employing IPA as a research method, especially regarding similar groups of participants to the Vietnamese in the UK.

First, although the thesis has been able to achieve the intended outcome of this research using this impactful methodology, the predominant issue with employing IPA that inhibits the researcher's thorough understanding of the group of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in the UK is their suspicion towards the purpose of the research and the researcher. Central to successful IPA research is the ability of the interviewer to facilitate detailed responses, especially from a population having such a high suspicion level as the Vietnamese. For

this reason, I found that conducting several pilot interviews with similar individuals (entrepreneurs in the UK) to the main participants to be essential, which allowed the researcher to gain experience and self-input for improvement. Then, it was also useful to transcribe these pilot interviews to give the researcher the luxury of time to think about a suitable schedule of questions for the subsequent interviews. Using these pilot interviews, the researcher familiarised himself with the various nuances of the approach, as well as allowed additional time to understand how participants would potentially respond to his questions, reducing the chances of closed, presumptuous and leading questions. As a result, the researcher made several thoughtful changes to the research design to make it more realistic. First, the researcher only used an audio recorder, without the presence of a camera phone, and limited the interview to one-hour maximum, and included all features of social interaction in order to make the participants more comfortable. Second, instead of conducting a follow-up interview, the researcher asked for the participants' consent to contact them via mobile phone and arranged a convenient time to contact them during the day. It was almost impossible to have a second interview with these Vietnamese entrepreneurs considering their busy schedules, as well as their overcautious nature towards someone unknown. While the researcher believes that this restructuring of the research design has hampered the richness of the data, the arduous data analysis process could be avoided by gathering data on one occasion only, with a thoughtful plan prepared based on the pilot interviews. The flexibility was achieved as the researcher did not have to wait until the completion of several sessions of interviews before commencing with the data analysis and developing an overall theme. The researcher was able to spend time sharpening the literature review and mulling over the

content of the interviews more carefully, case by case, resulting in a less time-intensive process (Smith, 2011). In addition, a researcher must anticipate the level of richness of the interview before conducting it, providing sufficient perspective to be able to add value to the study outcomes while providing a comfortable environment in the interviews. This can be done, as the researcher did with most participants before the interview, by meeting them in person and offering them small gifts (less than 10 GBP in value) showing the researcher's goodwill and sharing discussions about life experience in the UK not directly related to the questions in the interview. Through this ice breaking, the researcher was able to make sense of the way in which the participants make sense of the world from their own personal perspectives.

Furthermore, the importance of free imagination during analysis (Smith et al., 2011), combined with sematic and body language during the interpretation, cannot be underestimated. A researcher carrying out phenomenological research may find that it is unnecessary to transcribe information which will not be analysed (O'Connell & Kowal, 1995). However, without an account of the prosodic aspects of the recordings (e.g., length of pauses and non-conventional utterances), it will be difficult to analyse the true feelings, emotions and reactions that are reflected through the semantics and body language during the interview.

Last but not least, future scholars conducting IPA research in entrepreneurship on a less visible and less accessible ethnic immigrant entrepreneur group, such as the Vietnamese in the UK, may consider a mixed approach to the interview schedule, with a flexible

combination of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. This recommendation is based on the realisation that in such a group with high suspicion, the interview can unfold unexpectedly. Future research may consider similar samples across affluent countries, allowing the comparing and contrasting of research design and analysis employing IPA.

Summary notes on contributions

This chapter highlights theoretical contributions, practical implications, and contributions to IPA research. The most important theoretical contribution of this thesis is that it proposes viewing opportunity as being both created and discovered as action is taken based on an intersubjectivist view. This mixed view on opportunity allows research to examine the sensemaking of opportunity during the entrepreneurial process (or across the stages in this thesis). In terms of practical implications, this thesis suggests that the Vietnamese immigrant group in the UK may possess biased cultural perspectives that require special educational programmes (micro policies) and some form of economic incentive scheme (macro policies) designed to help them integrate more effectively into mainstream British society. This helps leverage the personality traits of the Vietnamese (hard-working and competitive) and creates a healthy service sector. At the same time, it seeks to promote more activities relating to service innovation amongst its members (e.g., the second generation of these entrepreneurs who are born and raised in the UK). Last but not least, this research also suggests that there is a need to do a 'pilot' before embarking on the literature, which is especially relevant to groups of individuals with a high level of suspicion towards other members of the same society.

5.4 Conclusion, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

5.4.1 Limitations and directions for future research

This study has limitations that provide future research opportunities. The section below will propose several potential limitations including the sampling method, choice of business sector, the IPA methodology, acculturation and the reluctance to take part in the interviews and to offer opinions by the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

Limitations towards sampling method

The Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK can somehow be considered as a 'hard-to-reach' population featuring a relatively high level of suspicion towards outsiders (and in this case: the researcher). The snowball method was primarily employed to draw a sample of nine individuals in this research. This method was particularly suitable as it utilised referrals from initially sampled respondents to other persons believed to have the characteristics of interest (Johnson, 2014). Snowball sampling is additionally attractive due to its low cost and relatively efficient method for locating the hard-to-find Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs who are willing to take part in this research. However, this method of data collection is considered non-random and can potentially suffer from several limitations which may affect the validity of this research. These include non-random selection procedures that reduce the level of generalisability, excessive reliance on the subjective judgments of informants, and even confidentiality concerns. In fact, the

lower level of generalisability can occur due to referrals made in smaller social networks limiting the search for participants to particular business areas (i.e., the service sector in this research). In addition, when people nominate other individuals, various considerations can take place. In such cases, the rationale for making a recommendation is often not easily controlled by the researcher.

Last but not least, there are concerns relating to the confidentiality of information. Specifically, some of the participants personally know each other. They are familiar with each other's business operations, and as a result, can quickly identify each other's business based on essential details provided in this thesis despite the use of pseudonyms.

Limitations towards (tertiary) service business sector

The sample has been primarily drawn from the population of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs operating in the tertiary service sector in the UK. Unlike the service innovation sector (e.g., Spohrer & Maglio, 2008) which occasionally offers high-profit margins (Grimshaw, Beynon, Rubery, & Ward, 2002) as well as perceived opportunities for personal growth and development (Birley and Westhead, 1994), there are valid reasons for an immigrant entrepreneur to start a business in the tertiary service sector. Entrepreneurs in the tertiary service sector can be attracted to the low barriers to entry, little start-up cash, low level of inventories, and fewer employees and physical space required in comparison to those operating in the service innovation sector (Rodie, Risch, and Martin, 2001). This group of immigrant entrepreneurs as a sample offers both the strengths and weaknesses to this research. One of the significant benefits of focusing

on this group is that they are more accessible to the researcher through the snowball sampling method. This consideration is especially useful for the case of the Vietnamese in the UK, who often possess a high level of suspicion and uncertainty avoidance when referrals are essential. On the limitation side, the sample may provide this research with potential bias to its findings. Many of the businesses place their focus around the 'survival' goal limiting the potential of this research to identify aspects of the link between culture and entrepreneurship as entrepreneurs take action on tasks relating to service innovation or manufacturing. This may involve, for example, the way in which culture influences how long-term goals are set and achieved.

To this end, there are opportunities to employ the concept of entrepreneurial bricolage, effectuation and improvisation on this group of tertiary service entrepreneurs (Fisher, 2012; Perry et al., 2012; Welter et al., 2016). These approaches to entrepreneurship that focus on leveraging the 'bird in hand' or what is readily available without considerable attention to the business goal may potentially share some commonality to the way the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs run their businesses. By researching the group of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs under bricolage, effectuation and improvisation, future research can improve the clarity of research in this area where conceptual research outweighs empirical studies (Eyana et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2012). For example, quantitative methods (e.g., exploratory factor analysis, hierarchical multiple regression) can be used to assess the ability of the entrepreneur's behaviour (e.g., causation vs effectuation in the tourism industry; Eyana et al., 2017) at a certain phase to predict the eventual performance of their newly established firms over a time period. Here, changes

in business performance (e.g., employment size, sales, profit and assets) and quantitative measures of culture (Aljarodi et al., 2010) can be assessed to explore the correlation further.

Additionally, future research should seek to test the effects of culture on entrepreneurial opportunity development on other groups of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in more consolidated settings, such as the former Soviet Union countries and the US community. It is also interesting to test on the second generation of the Vietnamese who lack a direct link with their parents' home country and often associate themselves with the identity of the host country, allowing some further understanding of the role of the connection of the home country upon nurturing the neo-Confucianism of the Vietnamese abroad.

Limitations towards the IPA methodology

This thesis examined a sample of nine Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in London, UK, using IPA. The analysis of typical IPA research often focuses on divergence and convergence, aiming to achieve detailed examination and nuanced analysis of the lived experience. It is through this procedure that time, reflection, and dialogue in each of the cases are maximised using a small sample size (Gonzalez-Perez et al., 2018). The IPA is especially suitable for groups with similar characteristics and less contrasting features (e.g., the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the UK sharing the FUSS factors) where perspectives can be explored in more depth (VanScoy & Evenstand, 2015). Although IPA does not specifically aim to construct an 'objective truth' about the phenomenon (Lyons

& Coyle, 2007) but rather gives a rigorous interpretation of the collective lived experiences of a group with similar characteristics, the small sample size can potentially result in possible bias or lack of generalisation. The problem exists because when examining in detail how someone makes sense of their life experience (Smith, Flower, and Larkin, 2009), researchers are required to bracket their subjective judgement and assess how their preconceptions shape the knowledge produced through personal self-reflexivity before being able to produce a detailed interpretation of the participant's account. Here, bias and lack of generalisation might still be a problem depending on the researcher's ability to objectively interpret the responses and identify understandings, perceptions, and accounts that ultimately lead to the development of relevant themes. Furthermore, IPA researchers are required to make inherent assumptions of the homogeneity of the sample which is liable to potential bias in cases where the group characteristics are not well-defined. Once an analysis has been performed, the salient differences within a sample can even be confused with the patterns of unanticipated and expected relationships which are often expected as the outcome of IPA research. Other minor limitations of using IPA in this research may lie in the fact that the IPA provides unsatisfactory recognition of the integral role of language or meaning making through narratives, discourse, metaphors. IPA requires both the participants and researchers to have the requisite communication skills and the right level of fluency to successfully communicate the nuances of experiences (Tuffour, 2017).

In general, while this research can potentially be criticised for a lack of generalisation, bias and issues associated with the assumption of the homogeneity of the sample from

using IPA as its research methodology, it is done in the form of an authentic research enquiry which aims to go beyond an understanding of the experiences of the participants as found in most IPA research. This thesis instead seeks to additionally explore the conditions that triggered the experiences which are located in past historical and socio-economical events. Since the study also found entrepreneurship as a process that unfolds over time, further research should employ time series data on various control and treatment groups to provide further evidence. Quantitative methods (e.g., partial least squares method; Castaño, Méndez, and Galindo, 2015) focusing on the significance of an individual's measurable success can also be combined to provide a more lavish exposition of the process by which immigrant entrepreneurs make sense of, form and preserve their intentions, both before and whilst performing entrepreneurial behaviour under the influence of the home and host cultures. Last but not least, although the link between sensemaking, entrepreneurial stages and culture is established in this research using the IPA, further research may employ an alternative method to identify whether culture mediates or moderates the relationship between sensemaking and the entrepreneurial stages. This will help future research more accurately describe migration entrepreneurship for the group of Vietnamese entrepreneurs in other regions of the world.

Potential of acculturation

This thesis recognises the potential cultural modification of an individual, a group, or people, which is the process of acculturation. Acculturation is defined as immigrants' acquisition of host-culture traits (Laroche et al., 1998) in which individuals from different cultural backgrounds change and adapt to traits from contacting other cultures (Keefe et

al., 1987). Several studies have identified that culture affects ethnic individuals' reaction and preference to do business from their own ethnic economy versus the mainstream economy (Wang, 2004). This thesis acknowledges that little has been discussed on the potential of acculturation to explain the behaviour of Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs in the findings and discussion sections. Acculturalisation orientation has been found to influence entrepreneurial activities of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia (Xu et al., 2019). Therefore, it would be interesting to explore whether the same factor is as influential based on the Vietnamese FUSS factors. The fragmentation and self-fragmentation tendency amongst the Vietnamese community opens door to an adaptation of other cultures' thinking and way of life when dealing with a matter that involves other Vietnamese entities. Although this thesis considers socioeconomic adaptation amongst Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs, acculturalisation orientation (e.g., the level of assimilation and integration) needs to be considered more explicitly in future research to distinguish the adaptation and behaviours between groups with an assimilation profile and an integration profile (Grigoryev & van de Vijver, 2017). Aspects of 'acculturation lag' (e.g., Arrighetti et al., 2017) that characterise immigrant entrepreneurs retaining traditional values from the home country or other cultures can also be explored in future research.

The reluctance to take part and to offer opinions

On a personal level, the researcher of this thesis was sensitive to how open the participants would be during interviews and was not surprised by the closeness of the participants due to the FUSS factors that exist amongst the Vietnamese community.

During these in-depth conversations, the Vietnamese immigrant entrepreneurs made their stories less explicit and demonstrated a low level of frankness and cooperation. It was, however, encouraging to find that the researcher managed to soon establish a reasonable level of connection with the participants due to the nature of his job as a researcher. In this case, he was not considered a direct competitor to their businesses. A scenario such as this poses the risk of acquiring less relevant information from these participants hence fewer insights. On several occasions, false impressions or evasive answers can occur to avoid a direct answer to the question in order to protect what they believe to be the 'secret recipes' to their success. At times such as this, the researcher was not able to delve deeper into the subject presently being discussed but instead waited until the right opportunities arose at a later time during the same conversation using a gentler approach.

5.4.2 Conclusion

Using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), the purpose of this research was to answer the question: *How do Vietnamese entrepreneurs develop opportunity through their cultural lens during immigrant entrepreneurship?* This research, therefore, aimed to investigate in detail the position of the links that immigrant entrepreneurs use to make sense of entrepreneurial opportunity through their direct action-oriented 'relationship among the language, cognition, and enactment of entrepreneurs' (Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010, p.539). Particularly, it explored how the Vietnamese neo-Confucian values (FUSS) influence the stages of the entrepreneurial process. This thesis took a biased approach

which is evidenced from the author's assumptions that the Vietnamese perspective is in some ways different from other cultural perspectives.

The thesis took a strong stance on viewing opportunity as a mixed phenomenon (both being created and discovered) and identified the gap in the literature that it is more important to understand how entrepreneurs make sense of such opportunity across the stages of entrepreneurial intention, opportunity recognition, opportunity evaluation and opportunity implementation. While the entrepreneurs engage in this process, cultural values such as the FUSS of the Vietnamese have been found to exert influence on decision-making leading to action. The findings propose that each cultural value dominantly affects a certain VSR stage in driving action that supports opportunity development.

By considering the relationship between entrepreneurial culture and opportunity through action, this research contributes to reconciling the cognitive and behavioural views on opportunities that have been argued to be widely scattered. This research contributes to the literature and practice by (1) confirming action as resembling opportunity development regardless of the stage of the entrepreneur, (2) promoting the link between culture and entrepreneurship viewed under the cognition-behaviour perspective (Kerr & Coviello, 2020). Moreover, implications for practice and the IPA methods have also been proposed (3) promoting a move in entrepreneurship research to the context of less accessible and less visible ethnic minority groups in the world such as the Vietnamese community in London (Bagwell, 2018).

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