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Crossing borders, building businesses: a science mapping of immigrant entrepreneurship research and future directions

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the knowledge structure of immigrant entrepreneurship and its impact on the socio-economy. As immigrant entrepreneurship has become a concern with its rapid development, scholars have focused on this niche entrepreneurship field. Through a science mapping technique using bibliometric analysis, the current and future trends of immigrant entrepreneurship were analyzed using bibliographic coupling and co-word analysis. Three themes emerged from bibliographic coupling analysis: 1) Women's immigrant entrepreneurship, 2) Transnational entrepreneurship and 3) Predictors and success factors of immigrant entrepreneurship. Future trends from co-word analysis are associated with 1) The Role of Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Employment Creation, 2) Social Networks and Embeddedness in Immigrant Entrepreneurship, and 3) Leveraging Social Capital for International Growth. Understanding immigrant entrepreneurship from the host countries' socio-economic context and immigrant entrepreneurs' talent provides crucial insight into how immigrant entrepreneurs contribute to economic development and growth. This study presents a science mapping on immigrant entrepreneurship and its future research agenda.

KEYWORDS

Immigrant entrepreneurship; transnational entrepreneurship; science mapping; bibliometric analysis

Introduction

History shows international immigration happens due to economic, social and political instability in the host country, usually from less developed to more developed countries (Pirnar and Altin 2024). The number of migrants worldwide has grown tremendously recently, from 220 million in 2010 to 272 million in 2019 (Ramos-Escobar et al. 2022). Immigration is increasing in many developed countries as host countries provide better economic opportunities (Neuman 2021). The research scope on immigrant entrepreneurship spans immigrants from developing to developed countries, mainly to Western Europe and North America (Gurau et al., 2020). Research also focuses on when immigrants have moved to host countries, shifting to assimilation and integration of immigrant entrepreneurs with the local community (Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami 2024).

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An immigrant is defined as an individual who moves from one country to another having the intention to take up permanent residency for some time due to economic, social and political reasons in their country of origin (Mattsson & Cassel, 2020; Pirnar and Altin 2024). Migrants entrepreneurs who are also referred to as “minority entrepreneurs”, “transnational entrepreneurs” and “diaspora entrepreneurs” which are all associated with the term “immigrant entrepreneurs” (Duan and Sandhu 2022). Migrant entrepreneurs contribute to the economic development of their host regions and countries (Mago, 2023). This impact on local economic development has urged scholars to explore the phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurship. This gap in the literature allows scholars to explore the phenomenon further and discover its topological and temporal knowledge structure.

Immigrant entrepreneurship can be better understood as a context specification than as a valuable empirical setting for advancing core discussions in management and organization studies. Immigrant entrepreneurship studies advance the discussion on organizational resilience, opportunity recognition, and network formation (Dabić et al. 2020). The dual context of immigrant entrepreneurs in both home and host countries offers a unique perspective on how organizations should respond to competing institutional logics and diverse stakeholder expectations. This phenomenon highlights the immigrant entrepreneurship literature in a broader conceptual discussion of how organizational processes unfold amid increasing market demand and challenging environments. However, immigrant entrepreneurs often face constraints in scaling their business, particularly in securing financial resources (Yasin et al. 2025). Beyond financial constraints, immigrant entrepreneurs frequently face structural and institutional barriers, including regulatory complexity, limited access to formal support systems, and discrimination in host-country markets. With these insights, there remains a substantial gap in the organization and management literature regarding how immigrant firms adapt to institutional pressures. Hence, this study aims to examine how immigrant entrepreneurs adapt their organizational managerial practices with a focus on enabling scalability and sustainable performance.

This review is motivated by two reasons. First is the overarching importance of immigrant entrepreneurship on local communities and economic development. Immigrant entrepreneurs are widely recognized as important contributors to host countries’ economic growth and innovation (Malerba and Ferreira 2021). While their contributions are significant, it is important to acknowledge the heterogeneity within this group, as not all immigrant entrepreneurs possess the same level of skills, resources, or capabilities. As most immigrant-owned businesses operate as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), they often demonstrate resilience while simultaneously facing substantial challenges in sustaining and growing their ventures in host-country environments (Haq et al. 2024). Immigrant entrepreneurs are preserved, able to connect with the local network and do business while distant from family members (Yetkin and Tunçalp 2023). This phenomenon has created a solid character to strive in the host country’s challenging and alienated environment. Immigrant entrepreneurs are productive entrepreneurs who positively impact economic growth and job creation (Malerba and Ferreira 2021; Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami 2024). For immigrants, entrepreneurship is seen as a tool to improve integration and involvement in the labor market (Malerba and Ferreira 2021). Apart from the macroeconomic contribution, immigrant entrepreneurs generate employment opportunities, reducing poverty and enhancing the overall well-being of local communities of the host country (Abdulai, Fuseini, and Yendaw 2024). They facilitate knowledge and technology transfer between countries of origin and host by strengthening innovation ecosystems and enhancing global competitiveness (Kerr & Kerr, 2020). Immigrant entrepreneurs also diversify local markets by introducing new products, services and business models leading to market dynamism and resilience (Dabić et al. 2020). As such, there is an urgent need to explore the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs to local economic development and measure the proportion of immigrant contribution to a much deeper level, such as their contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). Furthermore, this field of immigrant

entrepreneurship has attracted research from different fields, such as social sciences, management, economics, geography and many more (Dheer 2018). Thus, a broader cross-field study can be explored to link the scientific network of this field.

Second, there has yet to be a comprehensive review to uncover the state-of-the-art themes that can bring it to the global front. Despite that, several review studies have discussed immigrant entrepreneurship from various perspectives. Malerba and Ferreira (2021) reviewed immigrant entrepreneurship and strategy through a systematic review. The main finding shows that the competitive advantage of immigrant entrepreneurs is derived from their ability. Chreim et al. (2018) reviewed female immigrant entrepreneurship research from the social, human, and financial perspectives that help shape individual, firm, and societal entrepreneurial strategies. Sarihasan, Dajnoki, and Al-Dalahmeh (2023) reviewed immigrant entrepreneurship and gender dimensions. The study found that female immigrant entrepreneurs face various challenges due to disadvantages in terms of social capital, human capital and family support. Ramos-Escobar et al. (2022) conducted a performance analysis on immigrant entrepreneurship by identifying the most productive authors, publications, journals and trends. Pirnar and Altin (2024) reviewed immigrant entrepreneurship studies in the tourism industry and discovered that most studies from 102 applied qualitative approaches comprising in-depth interviews and comparative case studies. Duan, Kotey, and Sandhu (2023), in their systematic literature review, asserted that the pull factor (need for personal improvement, entrepreneurial desire and prior experience) had a greater impact on immigrant entrepreneurs compared to push factors (discrimination, lack of skills or legal migration documents). De Vita, Mari, and Poggesi (2014) performed a systematic literature review and suggest that research on women's entrepreneurship characteristics has shifted toward an in-depth study on specific topics such as family ventures and community support. Mago (2023) reviewed African migrant entrepreneurship, focusing on its social integration and development. It was found that social integration enhances migrant entrepreneurship and not vice versa. These reviews have provided crucial fundamental and in-depth analysis of immigrant entrepreneurship from respective points of view. However, essential gaps need to be addressed using content analysis, particularly regarding the emerging and future trends of immigrant entrepreneurship. As such, to fill this gap, the following objectives are presented based on the science mapping approach:

1. To determine current and emerging themes of immigrant entrepreneurship based on bibliographic coupling analysis.
2. To evaluate future trends and prospects of immigrant entrepreneurship based on co-word analysis.

The structure of the manuscript is as follows. First, the introduction of immigrant entrepreneurship is presented in this section. Next, the method and approach of science mapping and bibliometric analysis are elaborated. Section 3 showcases the findings and discussions of the clusters accordingly. Section 4 presents the implications of the findings based on the current theoretical and managerial approach. The limitations and future research avenues are presented in sections 5 and 6. Finally, section 7 concludes the study.

Methodology

Bibliometric approach

The bibliometric approach is quantitative and analyses bibliographic databases using a science mapping technique (Donthu et al., 2021). The bibliometric method is a third review method, where past scholars have extensively utilized the structured or systematic literature review and

meta-analysis (Zupic & Čater, 2015). There are two main approaches to bibliometric research: 1) performance analysis and 2) science mapping. Performance analysis evaluates impact based on research constituents in documents, authors, sources, institutions and countries (Noyons, Moed, and Luwel 1999). In contrast, Science mapping applies the bibliometric approach to evaluate the relationship between research constituents (Ahmad et al. 2024). To meet the objective of this study two analyses will be conducted to meet the study's objective:

1. Bibliographic coupling: This analysis focuses on the co-citing relationship between documents based on the exact references of two publications. The higher two publications are connected based on the same references they share and are said to have strong bibliographic strength (Zupic & Čater, 2015). For instance, when two documents are co-citing the same 10 documents, they have a bibliographic strength of 10. This analysis presents a field's current and emerging themes through its scientific network of citing publications (Donthu et al., 2021).
2. Co-word analysis: This analysis is based on the publication's actual content, using words retrieved from the title, abstract, and authors' keywords. The underlying principle of co-word analysis is that words with high occurrence in publications show a thematic relationship between them (Roodbandi et al., 2022). As such, this analysis enables the discovery of future trends in a particular field (Donthu et al., 2021).

Research design and data collection procedure

We employed the following search string (Table 1) to identify publications based on relevant keywords. The keywords are associated directly with immigrant and migrant entrepreneurship. Web of Science (WoS) is the database for document search as it is the most reputable and oldest indexing body in the scientific record (Pranckutė 2021). Compared to other databases such as Scopus, WoS maintains its quality by having only quality journals within its database (Fauzi et al. 2024). The topic search (TS) function captured keywords within the publication's title, abstract and keywords. The keywords must be captured within these locations to signify the article's importance. Furthermore, only journal publications are considered in the final database to ensure homogeneity and quality. Other publications, such as conference proceedings, books, book chapters, corrigendum, editorials and white papers, were excluded.

Results and finding

The search in WoS was performed on 11th August 2024. Initial retrieved publications were 1,239. After limiting the publication to only journal publications, the finalized publications were 1,081. Number of citations received was 14,663 and 9,971 (without self-citation). The average citation per item was 13.56, with an H-index of 51. Figure 1 shows the number of publications and accumulated citations. The pattern indicates that the number of publications peaked in 2023. Despite showing a sign of decline, immigrant entrepreneurship is much more relevant in broader fields such as entrepreneurship, economics, management, social science and others. Its contribution to the body of knowledge would still catch the interest of scholars and academics.

Table 1. Search string in WoS database.

No	Keywords	Justification
1	"immigrant* entrepreneur*" OR "migrant* entrepreneur*" OR "foreign* entrepreneur*"	To identify literature related to immigrant entrepreneurship

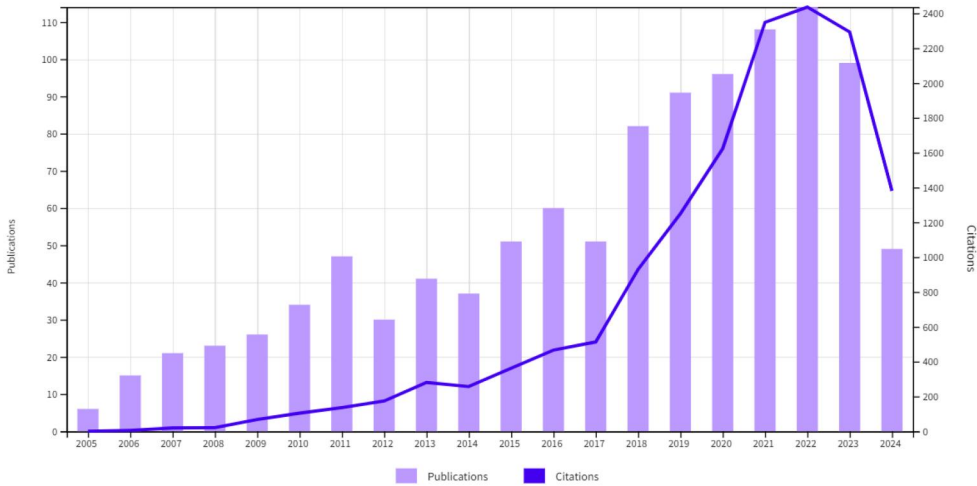


Figure 1. Number of publications and citations on immigrant entrepreneurship.
Source: Web of Science

Discussion

Bibliographic coupling

Of the 1081 documents, 37 met a threshold of 62 minimum citations, producing a robust and appropriate network visualization of the co-citing relationship between the publications. The threshold was determined by trial and error, testing different threshold levels from 30 to 40 until the threshold of 37 was perceived to produce the best map. This sensitivity analysis determined the most appropriate threshold level for producing a robust and clear map. The robustness of the map ensures a more comprehensive thematic analysis in the bibliographic coupling analysis. The threshold must not be too high, causing overfiltering, and not too low, causing underfiltering. Overfiltering would cause researchers to miss crucial themes, and underfiltering would cause redundancy of themes in the network map. The top-10 documents in bibliographic coupling analysis are shown in [Table 2](#). It is ranked based on the total line strength (TLS) that indicates the network's co-citing relationship. The top-3 highest bibliographic strengths are Kloosterman (2010) (75 TLS), Beckers and Blumberg (2013) (75 TLS) and Sequeira and Rasheed (2006) (73 TLS).

[Figure 2](#) presents the network visualization of bibliographic coupling. The map illustrates the topological structure of immigrant entrepreneurship literature, showing three distinct clusters of current and emerging themes. The labels were given according to the authors' inductive interpretations based on the research streams produced in each cluster.

Across the three clusters, immigrant entrepreneurship can be viewed as a multi-level, embedded phenomenon shaped by transnational linkages, gendered experiences, and individual success factors. Women immigrant entrepreneurs (cluster 1) act as strategic agents navigating intersectional constraints and empowerment perspectives. Cluster 2 highlights transnational entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurs leverage cross-border resources and networks, aligning with social capital and network theories. Meanwhile, success factors (cluster 3) are driven by a combination of individual capabilities and institutional conditions, consistent with the mixed embeddedness framework. Overall, these clusters suggested an integrated ecosystem where micro-, meso-, and macro-level domains interact. From a glass-ceiling perspective, there are persistent, invisible barriers that constrain women's advancement, and the mixed-embeddedness framework highlights how the interplay between individual resources and broader institutional contexts

Table 2. Top 10 documents in bibliographic coupling analysis.

Rank	Author(s)	Scope	Citation	TLS
1.	Kloosterman (2010)	A mixed embeddedness perspective on migrant entrepreneurship	382	75
2.	Beckers and Blumberg (2013)	Study of immigrant entrepreneurship in the Netherlands.	73	75
3.	Sequeira and Rasheed (2006)	The growth of small businesses among immigrant	70	73
4.	Danes et al. (2008)	Entrepreneurial experience from the perspective of ethnicity, families and culture.	178	67
5.	Ram, Jones, and Villares-Varela (2017)	Reflections on Migrant entrepreneurship	178	65
6.	Urbano, Toledano, and Ribeiro-Soriano (2011)	Transnational entrepreneurship in Spain.	64	62
7.	Bird and Wennberg (2016)	Immigrant entrepreneurs' exit from entrepreneurship due to family resources	92	60
8.	Ndofor and Priem (2011)	Immigrant entrepreneurs and venture performance.	158	58
9.	Chrysostome (2010)	Success factors of immigrant entrepreneurs:	90	56
10.	Collins and Low (2010)	Asian female immigrant entrepreneurs in Australia.	104	55

shapes entrepreneurial outcomes. These domains call for future research to adopt multi-level approaches to understand the evolving dynamics of immigrant entrepreneurship better.

Table 3 summarizes the bibliographic coupling analysis, including cluster number and color, labels, number of publications, and representative publications.

Co-word analysis

Applying the same database, the co-word analysis presents 46 out of 3,578 keywords that met 32 thresholds, resulting in three clusters. Like bibliographic coupling, the threshold was determined after several trials until a robust network was produced. The threshold was tested from 40 to 50 until 46 produced the most robust network visualization. The highest co-occurred keywords are “immigrant entrepreneurship” (216 occurrences), “entrepreneurship” (209 occurrences) and “migration” (188 occurrences) (see Table 4). These keywords represent an overview of the possible trends in immigrant entrepreneurship and future research agendas that can be further explored and discovered.

Figure 3 presents the network structure of the co-word analysis. It visibly shows three clusters representing three different themes. Following the author's inductive interpretation, the three clusters are assigned the appropriate labels.

Across the three clusters, immigrant entrepreneurship can be understood as a socially embedded and resource-driven process that contributes to employment creation, network formation, and international growth. Cluster 1 highlights the critical role of immigrant entrepreneurs in generating employment and supporting local economic development. More often, these entrepreneurs surpass native residents in job creation and firm expansion. This issue deserves attention, as the notion that immigrant entrepreneurs might form groups that dominate specific sectors of the economy, reshaping competitive dynamics and raising concerns about market inclusivity. Cluster 2 emphasizes the importance of embeddedness within social, economic, and institutional environments, where factors such as discrimination, gender gaps, and regulatory conditions shape entrepreneurial outcomes. Meanwhile, Cluster 3 focuses on the strategic use of social capital, particularly family networks, trust, and shared resources, which enable immigrant entrepreneurs to access financial, experiential, and institutional support for business sustainability and cross-border expansion.

Collectively, these clusters demonstrate that immigrant entrepreneurship operates through the interplay of job creation, embedded social structures, and social capital, suggesting the need for future research to examine how these dimensions interact to drive long-term growth and resilience in host economies. In this regard, the glass ceiling theory highlights invisible structural

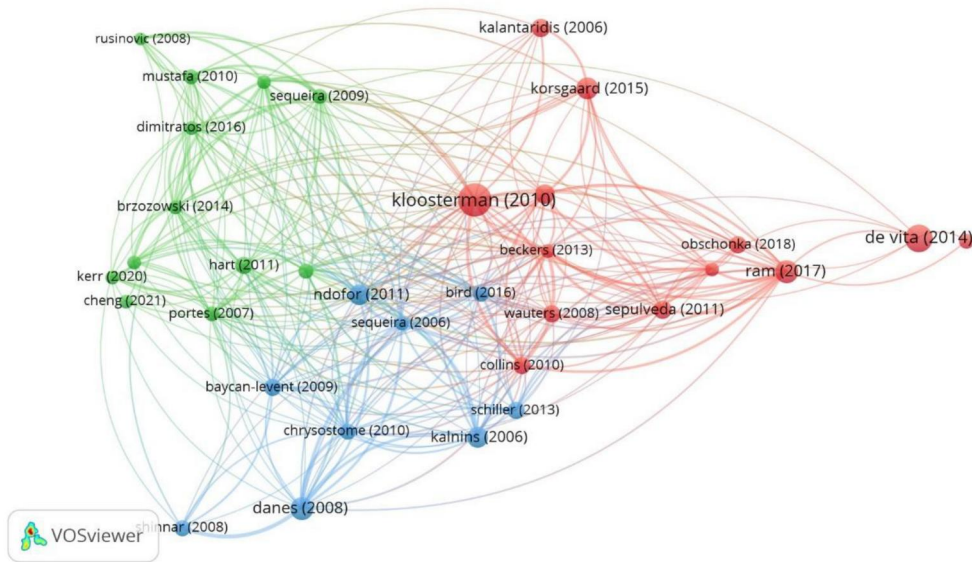


Figure 2.
Bibliographic coupling of immigrant entrepreneurship.

- **Cluster 1 (red): Women immigrant entrepreneurship**

Studies on women immigrants are among the highest concerns in immigrant entrepreneurship literature. Collins and Low (2010) asserted that female immigrant entrepreneurs rely on community and family networks like all female small business owners. According to Knight (2016), businesswomen are prone to operating in small spaces, and their labor-intensive businesses are known to need more mobility and low profits. Immigrant married women with young children are likely to engage in entrepreneurship activities as the only way to avoid unemployment (De Vita, Mari, and Poggesi 2014). The participation of women immigrant entrepreneurs, like women entrepreneurship, should be viewed not only as a lack of alternatives but as a way to empowerment and self-fulfillment (De Luca and Ambrosini 2019). These patterns reflect how immigrant women entrepreneurs leverage social capital from the management and organizational perspectives. Women are able to adopt flexible organizational structures and implement resource-constrained strategies to sustain their business operations.

- **Cluster 2 (green): Transnational entrepreneurship**

With the rise of countries' migration, there has been a high number of studies on transnational entrepreneurship and international entrepreneurship. Transnational entrepreneurship can be defined as social actors who propose information, ideas, networks and practices to seek business opportunities and maintain business within dual social fields (Dimitratos et al. 2016). According to Mustafa and Chen (2010), transnational entrepreneurs refer to entrepreneurs who rely on contacts in their country of origin. Brzozowski, Cucculelli, and Surdej (2014) discovered a crucial role of country-specific entrepreneurial factors in shaping ties-performance relationships. These dynamics highlight how transnational entrepreneurs strategically manage cross-border networks by coordinating resources across borders and leveraging country-specific advantages to enhance venture and organizational performance.

- **Cluster 3 (blue): Predictors and success factors of immigrant entrepreneurship**

The perseverance and determination have created strong characters among immigrant entrepreneurs, being far away from their homeland and family. Chrysostome (2010) suggests that the success factors of immigrant entrepreneurs include financial, psycho-behavioural, ethnocultural, and institutional factors. Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009) found that immigrant entrepreneurship in European countries is determined by distinct push factors (low participation and high unemployment rates) and accompanying factors, namely mixed embeddedness. Ndofo and Priem (2011) discovered that immigrant entrepreneurs' social identities and capital endowments directly impact their choice of ethnic enclave versus dominant market venture strategy. All these predictors have created the immigrant entrepreneurs' characters to succeed in foreign lands.

barriers that may constrain women's full access to entrepreneurial opportunities. The mixed embeddedness framework explains how the dynamic interaction between individual resources and socio-economic contexts shapes entrepreneurial outcomes.

Thematic evolution of immigrant entrepreneurship

To understand the evolution of immigrant entrepreneurship, a dataset of 493 documents from 2022 to 2026 was retrieved from WOS for analysis. Using Biblioshiny in RStudio, we produced a

Table 3. Bibliographic coupling analysis on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Cluster No and color	Cluster label	Number of publications	Representative publication
1 (red)	Women immigrant entrepreneurship	13	Collins and Low (2010), Knight (2016), De Vita, Mari, and Poggesi (2014)
2 (green)	Immigrant and transnational entrepreneurship	12	Dimitratos et al. (2016), Mustafa and Chen (2010), Brzozowski, Cucculelli, and Surdej (2014)
3 (blue)	Predictors and success factors of immigrant entrepreneurship	9	Chrysostome (2010), Baycan-Levent and Nijkamp (2009), Ndofor and Priem (2011)

Table 4. Top 15 keywords in the co-word analysis.

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Total link strength
1.	Immigrant entrepreneurship	216	748
2.	Entrepreneurship	209	717
3.	Migration	188	689
4.	Immigrant entrepreneurs	187	678
5.	Self-employment	174	733
6.	Mixed embeddedness	173	779
7.	Migrant entrepreneurs	147	600
8.	Business	142	577
9.	Performance	138	598
10.	Networks	130	636
11.	Ethnic entrepreneurship	117	507
12.	Determinants	93	445
13.	Immigrants	92	326
14.	Embeddedness	90	403
15.	Businesses	86	392

thematic evolution of immigrant entrepreneurship over the past five years (Figure 4). The central theme revolves around immigrant entrepreneurship, which ranked highest in 2022 and 2026, third in 2024, and second in 2025, indicating its prominence across the years. The second most central theme is impact and embeddedness, which reached its peak in 2025. This occurrence indicates a growing interest in how immigrant entrepreneurs integrate into local and international business ecosystems. Another important theme is entrepreneurship and migration, reflecting the close relationship between immigrant entrepreneurial activity and migration. Based on the trends in 2026, emerging areas likely to gain attention are self-employment, firms, experience, and performance. These thematic streams suggest a shift toward micro-, meso-, and macro-level analyses in immigrant entrepreneurship research.

Implications

Theoretical implications

This research explores the changing patterns of immigrant entrepreneurship, focusing on both current and future trends. By utilizing advanced science mapping techniques such as co-word analysis and bibliographic coupling methods grounded in bibliometric analysis - the findings of this study not only shed light on historical developments but also contribute significantly to ongoing research aimed at uncovering the complex knowledge structure surrounding immigrant entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the study examines the socioeconomic implications of these entrepreneurial activities, offering valuable insights into the role immigrants play in shaping economic landscapes.

Several fascinating theoretical implications were gained from the investigation of these theme areas. First, women and female entrepreneurship represent multifaceted challenges that have attracted significant attention from scholars, especially in recent years (Deng, Orbes, and Ma

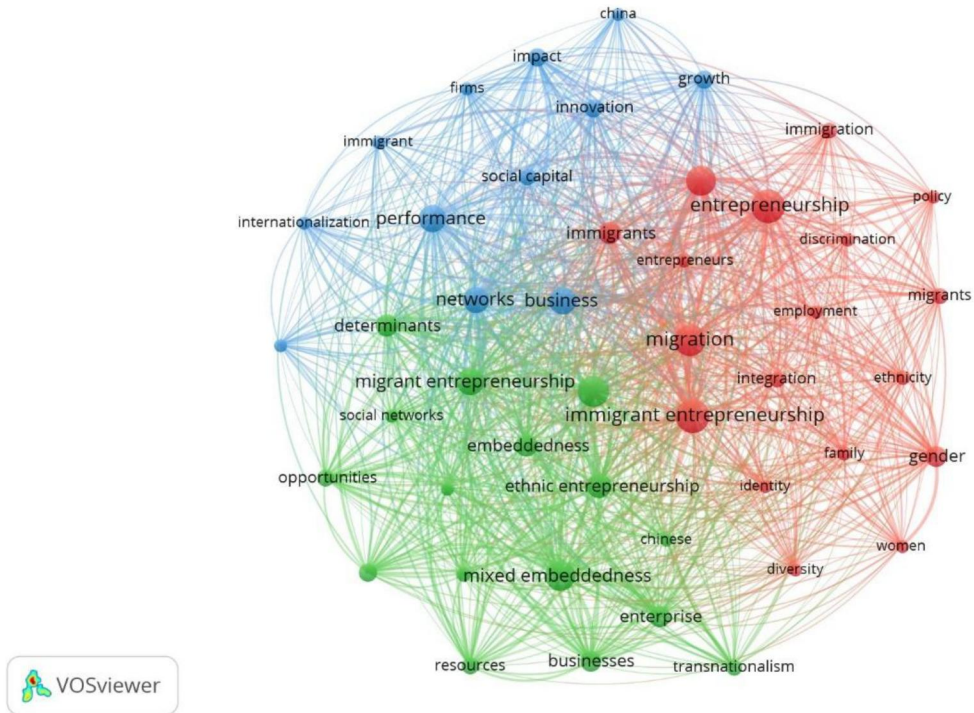


Figure 3.
Co-word analysis on immigrant entrepreneurship.

- **Cluster 1 (red): The Role of Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Employment Creation**

In many host countries, immigrant entrepreneurs provide the platform for local job opportunities. They create jobs and offer chances to local communities (Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami 2024). Duan et al. (2021) discovered that immigrant entrepreneurs benefit from the host country's entrepreneurial ecosystem and contribute to the host country's socio-economic development and job creation. Neuman (2021) found that self-employed immigrants produced higher profits than their native counterparts. It was also found that immigrant entrepreneurs have more employees in their firms. Immigrant entrepreneurs benefit from their home and host countries through job creation (Mago 2023). They will likely attract locals when they create employment in the host country. These findings suggest that immigrant entrepreneurs not only drive employment creation but also leverage opportunities within the host country to expand their ventures. This, in turn, enhances their performance by integrating local labor into their operations.

- **Cluster 2 (green): Social Networks and Embeddedness in Immigrant Entrepreneurship**

Immigrant entrepreneurship expands with the support environment conceptualized by the embeddedness of immigrants within the host country's social, economic and political-institutional environment. Brieger and Gielnik (2021) discovered that through the embeddedness approach, there is a significant gender gap in immigrant entrepreneurship. Yasin and Hafeez (2023) pointed to the issue of discrimination against first-wave entrepreneurs. Social and regulatory interventions must be made to ensure the survival of immigrant entrepreneurs for the second and third-wave immigrant business. Yang and Giroto (2024) identified the embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurs within four interconnected dimensions: personal, local context, business development stages and ethnic enclave. These networking and embeddedness factors shape how immigrant entrepreneurs structure their business by allocating resources and adapting organizational practices across different environments. For immigrant entrepreneurs, it is crucial that they are able to rely on their relationship with family, friends, and community by adapting to the local rules and culture in running their business.

- **Cluster 3 (blue): Leveraging Social Capital for International Growth**

Social capital is the social relationship that bonds between individuals in social settings. Examples of social capital dimensions are trust, network ties and shared goals. Most immigrant entrepreneurs rely on family social capital for building financial stability. Arshad and Berndt (2023) found that immigrant entrepreneurs' family networks facilitate their operation from their country of origin and country of residence. Besides financial capacity, experience and institutional knowledge are crucial resources for entrepreneurs seeking help from family networks. Gomez et al. (2020) discovered that entrepreneurs' social capital-mediated interactions within the community were not only driven by the social structure but also their agency, in particular, their motivations. Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami (2024) found that immigrant entrepreneurs rely on their resource-related and structural dimensions of social capital for entrepreneurial success. A summary of the co-word analysis is presented in Table 5, comprising cluster number and color, cluster labels, number of keywords, and representative keywords.

Table 5. Summary of co-word analysis on immigrant entrepreneurship.

Cluster No and color	Cluster label	Number of keywords	Representative keywords
1 (red)	The Role of Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Employment Creation	18	Immigrant entrepreneurship, migration, self-employment, entrepreneurs, integration, employment
2 (green)	Social Networks and Embeddedness in Immigrant Entrepreneurship	16	Immigrant entrepreneurs, embeddedness, mixed embeddedness, determinants, social networks
3 (blue)	Leveraging Social Capital for International Growth	12	Networks, international entrepreneurship, performance, internationalization, social capital, innovation, growth

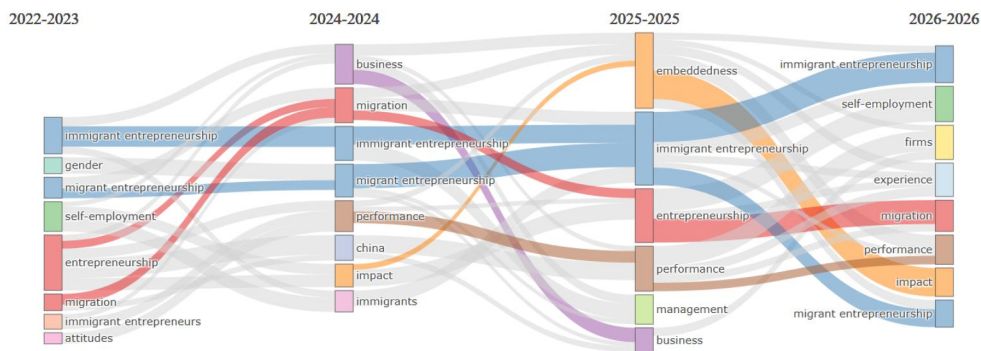


Figure 4. Thematic evolution of immigrant entrepreneurship.

2024; Kogut and Mejri 2022; Yang, Kacperczyk, and Naldi 2024). The study's bibliographic coupling analysis has facilitated a comprehensive examination of these dynamics, emphasizing that women entrepreneurs face several obstacles that might prevent them from succeeding, especially those from immigrant families (Mindes and Lewin 2024). Social marginalization is one of these challenges, which frequently keeps them from accessing critical support systems essential for navigating the path of entrepreneurship (Lewis and Crabbe 2024). Additionally, these women usually have limited access to financial resources (Sörensson and Ghannad 2024), a crucial aspect that can significantly limit their capacity to start and grow their enterprises. Likewise, cultural hurdles that they face may complicate their efforts, limiting their ability to navigate the entrepreneurial environment and accomplish their objectives (Wiig, Schou, and Hansen 2024). Because of this challenging environment, women's admission rates into entrepreneurship are startlingly low, and their departure rates are much higher (Sarihasan, Dajnoki, and Al-Dalahmeh 2023). This reflects the structural problems that must be resolved to assist female entrepreneurs better. Interestingly, societal and cultural gender stereotypes often worsen the challenges faced by female immigrants (Liñán, Jaén, and Rodríguez 2024; Love, Nikolaev, and Dhakal 2024), which create significant barriers to their entrepreneurial efforts. As a result, women may have different motivations and behavior patterns in entrepreneurship than their male counterparts. Thus, women entrepreneurs frequently encounter more obstacles when starting and growing their businesses than men.

Despite facing significant challenges, female immigrant entrepreneurs demonstrate remarkable resilience (Kitole and Genda 2024) and innovative (Chávez-Rivera, Ruíz-Jiménez, and Fuentes-Fuentes 2024). To launch and expand their businesses, they often need to tap into resource-constrained environments (Atarah et al. 2023); seek assistance from family members, friends, and

neighbors (Filimonau et al. 2024); build networking (Chen and Barcus 2024); and utilize social media (Ditta-Apichai, Gretzel, and Kattiyapornpong 2024). This resourcefulness highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship in the context of immigrant experiences. Many female immigrants often turn to need-driven entrepreneurship to support themselves and their children, pursuing business opportunities primarily out of necessity (Billore 2011). This observation highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how gender and immigrant status interact to influence networking opportunities, entrepreneurial outcomes, and overall business performance. Understanding these factors is essential for creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial environment that recognizes and addresses female immigrants' specific challenges.

Second, the bibliographic coupling analysis also explores the success factors and predictors significantly influencing immigrant entrepreneurship. This finding is rooted in a wealth of research identifying the many factors contributing to immigrant entrepreneurs' success (Chrysostome 2010; Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami 2024). Key factors include access to financial resources, which can provide the necessary capital to launch and sustain a business; market knowledge (Mostafiz et al. 2023), which equips entrepreneurs with the insights needed to navigate local demands and consumer behavior and strong networks facilitating valuable connections and support within the business community (Stephens 2013). Ultimately, the success of these immigrant entrepreneurs is greatly influenced by their human and social capital (Haq 2016; Urban, Murimbika, and Mhangami 2024). This capital encompasses their skills, education, experiences, and relationships, which help them tackle shared challenges such as limited initial resources and a need for more familiarity with the local market landscape.

Scholars have identified several critical factors that contribute to the entrepreneurial success of immigrants, including educational background (Piperopoulos 2010), previous business experience (Stephens 2013), and the possession of cultural capital (Gomez et al. 2015). Immigrants connected to networks - whether through ties to their home countries or within their local ethnic communities often find it significantly easier to navigate the challenges of starting a business and expanding their ventures. Moreover, studies have shown that many immigrant entrepreneurs take advantage of ethnic enclaves (Basu and Pruthi 2021), which serve as nurturing environments for business development. In these enclaves, entrepreneurs benefit from a concentrated pool of potential customers who share similar cultural backgrounds and access to a labor force that understands the nuances of the community. Additionally, the presence of like-minded business owners in these areas often leads to reduced competition, further enhancing the likelihood of success for newly established businesses. Subsequently, advances in this field of theory might lead to the development of comprehensive models that fully analyze various factors influencing immigrant entrepreneurs' success (Glinka and Hensel 2021; Gurău, Dana, and Light 2020; Vinogradov and Elam 2010). These models would consider external factors like access to markets, social networks, institutional backing, and internal aspects like a person's abilities, education, and prior business experience. To create an atmosphere that supports and fosters immigrant entrepreneurship, governments and business development organizations must better grasp these different success drivers (Collins 2003). By identifying and tackling these factors, companies may put plans into place that successfully empower and assist immigrant entrepreneurs in their endeavors.

In synthesizing the subject of immigrant entrepreneurship, this study proposes a conceptual framework comprising immigrant entrepreneurial outcomes, individual factors (micro-level), organizational and network factors (meso-level), and external factors (macro-level) (Figure 5). The core of immigrant entrepreneurship revolves around immigrant entrepreneurial outcomes, which include venture creation, business growth and scalability, innovation performance, and firm resilience, which are shaped by the micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors. At the individual (micro) level, outcomes are influenced by entrepreneurial self-efficacy, prior experience and skills, cultural values and adaptability, and the ability to recognize opportunities. Within an

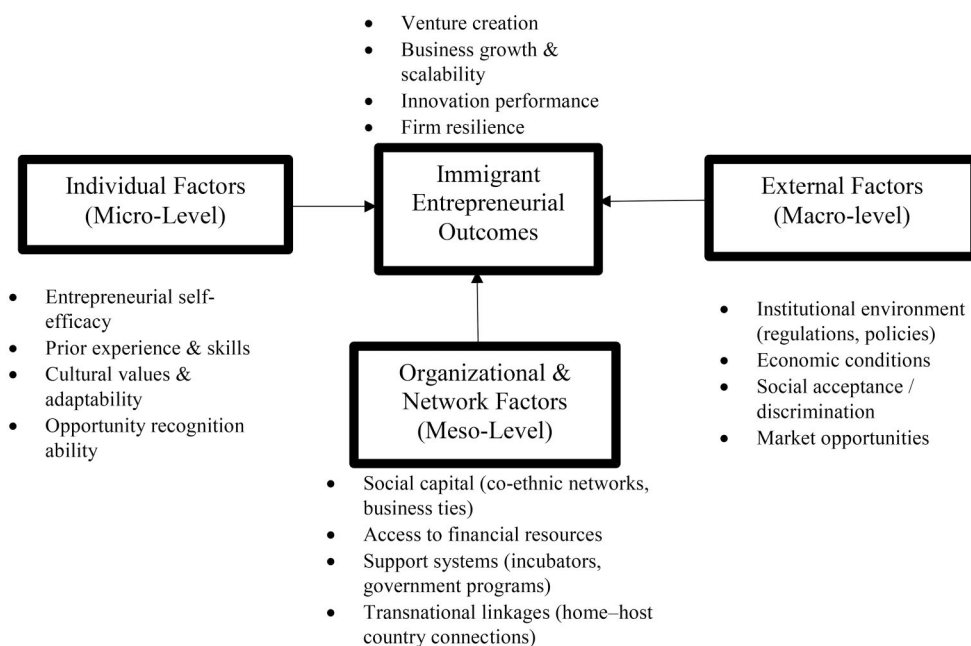


Figure 5. Conceptual framework of immigrant entrepreneurship.

Source: Authors' own creation/own work

organization, managers should give significant weight to the role of human capital and cognitive capabilities in entrepreneurial decision-making. At the organizational and network (meso) level, the framework emphasizes the importance of social capital (such as co-ethnic networks and business ties), access to financial resources, support systems (including incubators and government programs), and transnational linkages. These elements are crucial for organizations in fostering individual development into successful immigrant entrepreneurs who can navigate complex business environments. At the external (macro) level, immigrant entrepreneurship is shaped by institutional factors such as regulations and policies, economic conditions, social acceptance or discrimination, and market opportunities. These external factors define and shape the micro and meso levels of how immigrant entrepreneurs operate in alignment. Overall, the framework highlights that individual capabilities, organizational practices, and external conditions are interconnected, jointly shaping how immigrant entrepreneurs mobilize resources and achieve business success.

Managerial implications

Furthermore, the study provides compelling insights that highlight the implications for management practices. Cluster 1 from the bibliographic coupling analysis brings to light the crucial role of women in immigrant entrepreneurship, highlighting the urgent need for gender-inclusive support structures within entrepreneurship programs. This analysis reveals that women immigrant entrepreneurs encounter distinctive challenges that require tailored resources. These challenges include limited access to vital networks, insufficient resources, and a lack of cultural capital, which can hinder their business endeavors. Past research shows that many women immigrant entrepreneurs often turn to informal support systems, such as family and community networks, due to significant barriers to accessing formal funding channels, which can include traditional banks and venture capital firms. To address these disparities and foster a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, managers should consider implementing targeted training and mentorship

programmes including entrepreneurship courses, individual business consulting and personalized support in different languages (Aman et al. 2024). These programmes connect women immigrant entrepreneurs with successful businesswomen who share similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds, creating a supportive environment for knowledge exchange and personal growth. Such mentorship initiatives can facilitate the transfer of valuable insights and skills, bolster the confidence of women entrepreneurs, and help dismantle the barriers they face in the business landscape. Surangi (2022) suggest that gender-sensitive support systems not only increase the participation rates among women, particularly those from immigrant communities but also contribute to their overall success. Furthermore, cultivating inclusive environments where women entrepreneurs feel acknowledged and valued can significantly enhance business growth and reduce attrition rates within entrepreneurial networks, ultimately leading to a more diverse and dynamic economic landscape.

Cluster 3 in the bibliographic coupling analysis focuses on the various predictors and pivotal success factors inherent in immigrant entrepreneurship. Thus, it is crucial for managers and policymakers to understand that the journey toward success for immigrant entrepreneurs is often influenced by several key factors, including access to vital resources, educational opportunities, and in-depth industry knowledge. To foster a thriving environment for immigrant-owned businesses, establishing comprehensive programs that enhance these success factors is essential (Escobar, Lema, and Juárez 2024). Such initiatives can profoundly influence the longevity and profitability of these businesses, creating a sustainable impact on the economic landscape. For example, offering specialized training in critical areas such as local market dynamics, financial literacy, and digital skills can empower immigrant entrepreneurs with the essential tools they need to navigate the complexities of the business world more effectively. Mindes and Lewin (2024) highlight practical steps that involve fostering partnerships with financial institutions to provide microloans designed explicitly for immigrant entrepreneurs, complemented by hands-on workshops on effective resource management strategies. Moreover, Huang, Jiao, and Liu (2025) indicates that immigrant entrepreneurs who receive proactive guidance regarding regulatory compliance and tax obligations are significantly less likely to encounter operational disruptions. Therefore, managers can play a vital role in facilitating informative workshops and dedicated advisory sessions and offering digital resources to help familiarize immigrant entrepreneurs with the regulatory landscape and market expectations. Through these efforts, we can build a stronger foundation for immigrant entrepreneurship, ultimately contributing to a richer and more diverse economic fabric.

Conclusion

This science mapping analysis on immigrant entrepreneurship has provided crucial insights on its current and future trends. Three current and three future themes were identified based on two bibliometric analyses employed. The limitations and future research avenues in this review are discussed.

Limitations

This study recognizes some limitations that may impact its findings. The first limitation is the inconsistent terminology used to describe ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. Ethnic entrepreneurship typically pertains to immigrants who have a shared ethnic background. However, this study emphasizes the immigrant context as a process in which immigrants leverage economic opportunities provided by host countries to establish new businesses and secure venture capital (Malki, Uman, and Pittino 2020; Sarihasan, Dajnoki, and Al-Dalahmeh 2023). Second, this study's analyses may miss the complex ways social capital functions in immigrant communities

encompass both quantitative and qualitative dimensions that are not easily captured in the analyses (Rodrigues et al. 2024). Because qualitative research can shed light on the unique social networks and embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurs in their communities, it is frequently more appropriate to investigate these constructs. Therefore, the multifaceted function of social capital in immigrant entrepreneurship may not be well captured by this research. Third, the analyses may not take these contextual variations into account because they frequently combine results from many studies and geographical locations. This is because due to their large publishing networks and large immigrant populations, Western nations may dominate the literature with their viewpoints, which could introduce cultural prejudices. In non-Western environments, where cultural and policy issues may impact entrepreneurship in different ways, this can result in an imperfect understanding of immigrant entrepreneurial dynamics. Lastly, although bibliometric techniques provide insightful information about themes and patterns, overcoming drawbacks, including case studies, qualitative interviews, and cross-cultural analyses, needs additional research techniques. A more thorough and sophisticated understanding of immigrant entrepreneurship may be developed with the aid of this multi-method approach.

Future research avenues

Future research has the potential to greatly enhance the understanding of the subject by effectively identifying and addressing the various gaps and limitations in the current study and existing literature. Hence, the current study will outline several potential avenues for future research. First, the cluster on “Women immigrant entrepreneurship” highlights the unique experiences, challenges, and strategies of women immigrant entrepreneurs. Future studies could focus on understanding how gender intersects with other social categories, such as ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status, to influence entrepreneurial outcomes for immigrant women. Additionally, investigating specific barriers women immigrant entrepreneurs face in accessing financial capital, social networks, and institutional support could yield valuable insights. In the same way, it is pivotal to better understand how these entrepreneurs deal with the convergence of gender and immigrant status, qualitative research or mixed-method techniques may be able to convey the complicated and nuanced reality they encounter. Additionally, research might look at how work-life balance, cultural norms, and family structures affect immigrant women’s entrepreneurial experiences. Indeed, examining these patterns in various cultural and economic situations could yield information for support initiatives and policies that are specifically targeted.

Subsequently, although there is room for more research into the various factors influencing immigrant entrepreneurs’ success, the study shows a cluster focused on the “Predictors and success factors of immigrant entrepreneurship”. Future studies should investigate the interactions between variables that affect entrepreneurial outcomes, such as prior education, professional experience, and language ability. Furthermore, analyzing how immigrants use their past knowledge and experience from their home countries could reveal what factors aid in their successful adaptation to other markets. As immigrant entrepreneurs acquire more expertise and adjust to the business environment in their new homeland, longitudinal studies could look at how success determinants change over time. In the same way, future research could also investigate how immigrant business owners deal with financial and regulatory constraints, emphasizing the importance of resilience and adaptability in their success.

Future studies could further explore several emerging issues in immigrant entrepreneurship and current developments in general entrepreneurship. One of the most developed aspects is the digitalization and platform-mediated entrepreneurship. Digital platforms such as e-commerce marketplaces, social media, and gig-based applications enable immigrant entrepreneurs to overcome entry barriers such as regulatory constraints, restricted access, and limited capital (Sitaridis and Kitsios 2024). Future studies should explore this further, as these platforms facilitate market

access and support businesses by enabling operations across multiple markets. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) has shaped business operations; hence, immigrant entrepreneurs' use of AI is an area that needs to be explored, including their capabilities and knowledge of using AI for entrepreneurial activities. Another aspect that warrants further study is the impact of war on the influx of immigrants and on immigrant entrepreneurship. War remains a global phenomenon that continuously drives forced migration and displacement, creating entrepreneurship as a survival mechanism and economic adaptation. Evidence depicted that armed conflicts reshape entrepreneurial ecosystems, leading to instability and reduced investment (Salvi, Hechavarria, and Gimenez-Jimenez 2025). Other subjects that warrant further investigation include economic uncertainty and sustainability-related transitions in immigrant entrepreneurship. Finally, examining organizational and management practices within immigrant-led ventures could provide valuable insights into how these businesses sustain growth and adapt to challenges in complex environments.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Sangari Chelvam**: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft; **Chong Chin Wei**: Project administration, Resources; **Christine Tan Nya-Ling**: Data curation, Validation; **Serikkhan Zhuzeyev**: Investigation, Visualization; **Irene Ting Wei Kiong**: Methodology, Writing – review & editing; **Ahmad Samed Al-Adwan**: Validation, Writing – review & editing; **Muhammad Ashraf Fauzi**: Formal analysis, Software.

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Data availability statement

Data will be provided upon request.

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