

CHINESE PRACTICES IN IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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The growing relevance of Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs (Kamitewoko, 2013) has led to an increase in empirical research on aspects of immigrant Chinese entrepreneurship and small businesses. Chinese small retail businesses in South Africa have increasingly been perceived as competitive and successful entrepreneurial endeavours (Willemse, 2013). This study focuses on investigating how Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs who own small retail businesses within the Eastern Cape province of South Africa identify opportunities. The study followed a qualitative research design using a constructivist paradigm in which 22 in-depth interviews were conducted. The findings show that Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs adopted various practices in operating their small businesses which enabled the identification of opportunities in the business environment. These practices included a) *drawing on ethnic relations in business*, b) *local employees as business connectors*, and c) *corroboration with customers*. *Drawing on ethnic relations* involved the interactions the Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs had with family members that facilitated the identification of opportunities. Whereas, *local employees as business connectors* involved the practices of leveraging on local employees to identify opportunities in the business environment. Finally, the *corroboration with customers* entailed the practices adopted by the Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs of interacting with interactive and repeat customers that facilitated the identification of opportunities. Social capital embedded in relationships with various stakeholders was key to the process of identifying opportunities.

REFERENCES

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