Exploring the Growing Link of Ethnic Entrepreneurship, Markets, and Pentecostalism in London (UK): An Empirical study

Ayantunji Gbadamosi
School of Business and Law
University of East London
Stratford, London
E15 4LZ
Email: A.Gbadamosi@uel.ac.uk
Tel: 02082232205

Abstract

Purpose: While many issues about the entrepreneurial engagements of African-Caribbean (AC) have been discussed in the literature; there is far less studies documented about the link of these activities to faith, especially in the context of Pentecostalism. Hence, this research unravels how membership of Pentecostal fellowships aids the entrepreneurial activities of AC members.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Adopting the interpretive research paradigm, a total of 25 tape-recorded, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with AC entrepreneurs who are members of Pentecostal faith-based organisations in London, and Pastors in this same sphere. 16 of the respondents are entrepreneurs running and managing their businesses while seven are Pastors, and the remaining two fall in both categories as they are both entrepreneurs and still serving as Pastors in churches in London. Rather than merely serving as gatekeepers for information, the pastors are active participants/respondents in the study.

Findings: The paper highlights the challenges confronting the African-Caribbean ethnic entrepreneurs but also suggests that those in the Pentecostal faith are motivated and emboldened by the shared values in this religion to navigate the volatile marketing environment. It unveils participants' faith in God as their key business survival strategy. It also shows the unwavering confidence of the respondents that this religious stance results in outstanding business successes like increase in sales and profits, competitive edge, divine creativity and innovation, opportunity recognition, networks, institutional support and other factors that underpin entrepreneurship.

Originality/Value: This study unpacks the thickly blurred link between Pentecostalism as a thriving religious orientation among the African-Caribbean ethnic group in the UK and their entrepreneurial engagements.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, African-Caribbean, Pentecostalism, London, Faith, Success-factors, Religion, Shared values, Challenges, Marketing

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Keywords: Africa, Culture, Religion, Pentecostalism, Entrepreneurship, Social Capital

Introduction

As the number of people of ethnic minority in the British society grows, so is the research attention focussed on studies relating to them, and their entrepreneurial activities in the UK (Davidson *et al.,* 2010; ONS, 2011; Gbadamosi, 2012). For example, it is noted that they contribute between £25 billion and £32 billion to the UK economy per year (Regeneris Consulting, 2010 cited in Carter *et al.,* 2013), and with reference to 2001 census, it has been shown that over 24,000 of black people in London are self-employed, and there were over 10000 black-owned business establishments employing one or more people in London (GLA, 2004). Although there have been concerns about the relative inadequacy of the number of these businesses in the UK when compared to other ethnic groups, the statistics still suggest that Black-owned Enterprises contribute considerably to the economy in various forms (See Table 4). Even though many issues have been discussed in the literature about the entrepreneurial engagements of this group (African-Caribbean); there is far less studies documented that link these entrepreneurial activities to faith, especially, in the context of Pentecostalism which is very prevalent among this category of ethnic minority in the UK. Hence, it will be both theoretically and managerially beneficial to explore this topic as it will enrich understanding in the relevant literature. This is because religion is notably pervasive in its influence, playing roles in virtually all of the aspects of human life including entrepreneurial or business activities (McFarlane**,** 2010). This emphasises that religion influences and is influenced by society, and gives meaning and shape to the ethical structures of society (Drakopoulous and Seaman, 1998).

While there are many faith-based organisations in the UK, this study is specifically about entrepreneurial activities of members of Pentecostal movements in this society which constitute the fastest growing belief these days. This is evident in Table 2 which shows that apart from small denominations, Pentecostal churches as a category has the highest number

of increase between 2008 and 2013 in the UK (Brierley, 2014). They represent a quarter of Christians worldwide and emphasise the workings of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2004; Barker, 2007). It has been noted that both black African and Caribbean blacks are significantly religious (Hunt, 2002; Taylor and Chatters, 2010). Hence, exploring the trajectory between their entrepreneurial activities and religious belief is a promising research endeavour. In specific terms, this research is set to unravel how membership of Pentecostal movements aids the entrepreneurial activities of members in relation to creativity, decision-making, networking, efficiency, effectiveness, perception of success and failure in business, opportunity recognition, and other relevant factors that underpin entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Background

Entrepreneurship among African-Caribbean Ethnic group: A theoretical Overview

Generally, entrepreneurship is a lucrative research area (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2008). Similarly, the entrepreneurial activities of the African-Caribbean group have been a focus in the literature for some times (Blankson and Omar, 2002; Davidson *et al.,* 2010; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2012). However, there are some noteworthy issues that typify businesses owned by the African- Caribbean (AC) entrepreneurs. There is a claim that the AC ethnic group in the UK has comparatively not been as successful in entrepreneurship as some other ethnic minority groups (Reeves and Ward, 1984; Ram *et al.,* 2002). It has been stated that black-owned establishments are likely to be in "vulnerable sectors" hence may require special interventions to survive (Nwankwo, 2005: Nwankwo *et al.,* 2010). The documented framework to engage African–Caribbean Businesses in the North-West of England indicates that 95.3% of the African-Caribbean businesses are micro-enterprises with less than 9 employees and are predominantly in certain sectors which often include Personal services, Hire and repair, Catering and Accommodation, Retail, Health and Social Care (Comrie and Adeluwoye-Adams, 2008). Blankson and Omar (2002) also found that majority of the African Caribbean entrepreneurs who participated in their study operate solely within the vicinity of their ethnic minority group and both wealth of experience and support from family and friends contribute to the achievements of those who claimed to be successful. This brings in the relevance of the concept of Mixed embeddedness and Social Capital. In their postulation, Kloosterman *et al*. (1999) argue that mixed embeddedness explains the interplay of opportunity structure, immigrant context, and the complexity associated with how the immigrant businesses are inserted into the host environment (Peters, 2002). Hence, the rise of ethnic immigrant entrepreneurship is located at the intersection of changes in social-cultural

framework and transformation process in economic and institutional framework (Kloosterman *et al*., 1999). In other words, ethnic businesses' operations are within the socio-economic and politico-institutional environment (Dasler *et al.,* 2007). It is therefore not surprising that, contrary to some common assumptions, Okunta and Pandya (2007) found that poor entrepreneurial performance among the African-Caribbean ethnic group is not necessarily related to culture or ethnicity but could be linked to many complex factors including those outside their control. In exploring the motives for starting a business, Scheinberg and MacMillan (1988) use a trait approach to provide a robust explication on this issue. According to them, in starting a business, people are motivated by Need for approval, Need for Personal development, Need for Independence, Need for Escape, Perceived instrumentality of wealth, and Degree of Communitarianism. Meanwhile, in comparing UK, Norway, and New Zealand, Shane *et al.* (1991) found that differences exist concerning motives for starting business between countries. This view is shared by many others in the literature (Mueller and Thomas, 2001; McGrath *et al*, 1992); Supporting the notion of cultural differences further, Mueller and Thomas (2001), for example show that individualistic cultures encourage an internal locus of control orientation while a nation with 'supportive' national culture would increase entrepreneurial potential through a combination of support from many factors such as political and social. Another interesting contribution to this is the contribution on cognitive approach to the understanding of motives for starting a business. Mitchell et al (2000) is an example of studies that identify knowledge structures which entrepreneurs use for making assessment and judgements about business opportunities and creating business growth. Meanwhile, the relevance of social capital in the explication of the African Caribbean entrepreneurship cannot be trivialised. Tracing the early use of the term to Hanifan (1916), Wallis *et al.* (2002: 240) stress that the two key features of the phrase social capital are that: '…(a) goodwill, fellowship, and other social attributes have an instrumental value in terms of measurably improved living conditions… [and] (b) it has both private benefits and positive externalities'. Hence, Anderson and Jack (2002) state that it is the glue which forms the structure of networks and a lubricant that facilitates their operations. In relating the term to entrepreneurship, Bridge (2013) likens it to the position of vitamins in a diet, and concluded that it could be in different forms with each making its separate contribution that cannot be substituted for another. This supports the view of Whitehouse (2011) who links it to social networks which are described, in the context of his study, as associated with reciprocity, mutual assistance practiced by members of ethnic group with

shared identity and strong common bond among members. Similarly, linking the concept to church membership in a study related to Brazilian communities in the US, Martes and Rodriguez (2004) show that it can provide a 'safer' environment as linked to considerable level of perceived solidarity and trust. Meanwhile, the extent to which Pentecostalism could serve as a form of social capital in relation to the African Caribbean entrepreneurial ethnic community in the UK is yet to be accorded adequate research attention in the literature.

Essentially, it has been documented that securing financing is a major challenge to ethnic minority businesses (Barrett, 1999; Hussain and Matlay, 2007; Carter *et al.,* 2013). It is not surprising that an Ethnic Minority Business taskforce was established in 2007 by the UK government to investigate a number of issues including reasons for poorer credit outcomes, underlying higher loan denial rates, and interest payments amongst these entrepreneurs (Fraser, 2009). However, the problem of financing appears to be more pronounced for the African-Caribbean owned businesses (Barrett, 1999; Comrie and Adeluwoye-Adams, 2008). This seems to lay credence to the argument that racial disadvantage has had an impact on the entrepreneurial quests of the group. For instance, in a study of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) female business owners, Davidson *et al*. (2010) found that not less than half of their respondents had experienced discriminations in relation to their gender, ethnic background or both. Specifically, it was reported that BAME female entrepreneurs are confronted with racism and sexism – double negative (Davidson *et al.,* 2010). Hence, it is logical to argue that African Carribean entrepreneurs are confronted with huge challenges while competing in the volatile marketing environment which suggests a need to support their entrepreneurial endeavours. Again, another broad view on ethnic minority businesses in general argue that establishing a strategy to address their needs has two core justifications which are economic development and social equity reasons (Ram and Smallbone, 2001). In the view of these authors, the former emphasises that, doing so will contribute towards strengthening the economy; while the latter revolves around the increasing number of some ethnic minority groups in the society such that justifies reinforcing ethnic entrepreneurship within these groups. In terms of business support, Davidson *et al* (2010) emphasise that there are two main supports – emotional and instrumental supports. The emotional support relates to the intangible support in the form of respect, acceptance, and caring provided to encourage entrepreneurship, whereas the instrumental supports are basically the tangible support provided to aid business formation and management such as financial assistance and advice.

However, Nwankwo *et al*. (2010) found that the mainstream provision of business support designed for aiding entrepreneurship among the African- Caribbean group is not achieving its aim. Accordingly, one can insinuate that the complexity and problems associated with obtaining support from the mainstream support system are part of the factors that prompt these AC entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs to turn attention to several other sources (such as their faith-based organisations) for succour.

Pentecostalism: Origin and Links to African-Caribbean Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Early research on religion and entrepreneurship has made a case for linking religion beliefs and economic activities (Weber, 1904-5; 1930; 2002). Similarly, Dana (2010) shows how religions serve as reservoir of wisdom and value towards shaping entrepreneurial activities. More recently, Tracey (2012) highlights, in a broader scope, the potential of religion as a domain of study in management and argues that little is known about the dynamics of religious organisational forms or their influences on broader social processes and other kinds of organisations. Accordingly, there is a lacuna in the literature in relation to how Pentecostalism as a specific religious belief shapes entrepreneurship of African Caribbean in the UK.

Pentecostalism has been consistently described as a religion characterised with the prominence of the Holy Spirit as the source of empowerment from above (Kalilombe, 1997, Casanova, 2001; Anderson, 2004, Robbins, 2004). Put differently, according to Barker (2007: p414), it involves a "highly personalized relationship with God whereby individual worshippers experience personal salvation through conversion and baptism by the spirit". Historically, it dates back to 1906 when it originated from Los Angeles, within the working class, mixed raced neighbourhood (Barker, 2007). While the origins of Pentecostalism were documented to be in American Pentecostal movements, it was introduced among black people in British society through the Caribbean (Kalilombe, 1997) and is linked to immigration (Chivallon, 2001). Hence, the significance of Pentecostalism in the attempt to unpack African-Caribbean entrepreneurship dynamics cannot be trivialised.

Given the link to its origin in the US, it appears reasonable to use this as a platform to explore the subject. Adopting this approach shows the work of Taylor and Chatters (2010) as very relevant. They emphasise that Black churches are traditionally involved in spearheading a

number of programmes geared towards emphasising their significant roles in mediating the broader social environment. Such programmes cover social, educational, and health services to congregants and surrounding communities in various forms such as economic development initiatives, income maintenance, youth programs, job training programs, programme for the elderly and their caregivers (Taylor and Chatters, 2010). This view portrays the image of the African-Caribbean Christianity presented by Howard (1987). According to him, they have been made to understand through missionary evangelization in their countries that church provides a comprehensive fellowship in which members are bound into one new spiritual family in the name of faith, one baptism, one Lord and one Spirit (Howard, 1987). Given this all-encompassing role of Pentecostal churches to their members, this stresses the relevance of social capital in Pentecostalism among members as argued by Wallis et al (2002 and Anderson and Jack (2002). Accordingly, one might possibly argue that the churches would be willing to work towards supporting entrepreneurship among members.

McRoberts (1999) also shows that black Pentecostalism has become politically and socially active, and concludes that it will surely impact many communities. Although, this study is US based, the trend in the UK suggests that, a similar pattern will very much likely be the case. For example, Kalilombe (1997) highlights that Black Christianity in Britain is significant to the Caribbean as a means of making sense of their status as ethnic minority in the society and meeting their needs which could not be met otherwise. Similarly, Hunt and Lightly (2001) explain how the contemporary Pentecostal movement has contributed greatly to the fresh 'revival' in the UK in relation to getting numerous converts and rapid congregational growth among West African churches. This explains why Robbins (2004) describes it as one of the major successes of cultural globalisation. In the view of Weller (2004), the religious organisations in the UK are endowed and became acknowledged as potential major players on issues related to engagement and regeneration. The foregoing thus corroborates Anderson *et al*.'s (2000) findings that religion played a significant role to influence enterprise culture in Britain in the 80s. Essentially, they argue that enterprise culture draws upon religion to justify and explain itself while church draws on entrepreneurship to convey its contemporary mission (Anderson *et al.,* 2000). Casanova (2001) suggests that religion should be conceptualized more as cultural systems rather than religious markets. However, the question of how this phenomenon impact African-Caribbean entrepreneurship in the UK is yet to be fully explored.

Some other interesting links between entrepreneurship and Christianity have been highlighted in the literature (Cao, 2008; Dodd and Seaman, 1998; McFarlane, 2010). Cao (2008) explores the activities of the "boss Christians" who are private business owners and publicly acknowledge to have received their blessings from God. In this study, attention was focussed on the relationship between capital practices and religion ethics. Cao (2008) specifically highlights how the newly rich business-owners fund church building projects, evangelical organisations and church initiatives in the city of Wenzhou. Hence the dynamics of Christian development, how regional political economy, local cultural and religious intertwine are exposed. This view corroborates Dodd and Seaman (1998) who show that the role of religion in strengthening or weakening the munificence of the environment for entrepreneurship can be conceptualised into two forms. The first is that it strengthens or weakens other environmental munificent factors and secondly operates as one of such factors in its own right. Specifically, Dodd and Seaman (1998: 73) state that 'for practicing members of a faith, those with whom they have especially strong personal ties or trust and friendship are likely to be drawn from the ranks of their co-worshippers. This emphasises the prevalence of personal contact network among members in similar faith on various issues including entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, the trajectory of Pentecostalism and African-Caribbean entrepreneurship still remains largely unexplored and doing this will extend the current understanding in this context.

METHODOLOGY

This empirical study is rooted in *Interpretivism* research paradigm. According to Kirk and Miller (1986: p9), this tradition involves 'watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms'. Since collecting data qualitatively could be done through numerous ways, in-depth interview was chosen for the study as it tends to offer mutual understanding between the researcher and the researched within the context of the research objectives (Silverman, 2003) and is a versatile data collection mode (Welman *et al*., 2005). Hence, a total of 25 tape-recorded, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with African- Caribbean Entrepreneurs who are members of Pentecostal faith-based organisations in London and Pastors in this same faith (See Figure 1). 16 of the respondents are entrepreneurs running and managing their businesses while seven are Pastors, and the remaining two fall in both categories as they are both entrepreneurs

and still serving as Pastors in churches in London. These pastors were specifically recruited to be active participants in this study rather than merely acting as gate-keepers for information. Details of the respondents are presented in Table 1. London is considered a significant location for this study because of its ethnically diverse population and has the highest number of self-employment statistics in the UK (see Tables 3 and Table 5). The respondents were recruited through the use of snowballing and purposive sampling methods with the assistance of Pastors as key gatekeepers in the process. These sampling methods worked complementarily. Driven by the objective of the study, the respondents had to be selected purposively to be individuals with knowledge of the subject under study. Meanwhile, the use of snowballing is considered helpful because the personal recommendations from respondents vouched for the legitimacy of the researcher (Bloch, 2004), and substantially increased the likelihood of finding the desired characteristics in the population (Malhotra *et al.*, 2013). The adequacy of the data collected was determined through theoretical saturation which is the stage when no new idea was forthcoming with the inclusion of additional interview (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Figure 1 here

As expected in a study of this nature, all necessary ethical issues were adhered to during the study**.** Observing the necessary ethical guidelines is essential when studying other people, especially in using qualitative studies (Malhotra and Peterson, 2001). These issues have been identified to be confidentiality, informed consent, protection from harm, and right to privacy (Fontana and Frey, 1998; Ali and Kelly, 2004). In addition to clearly explaining the objective of the study to all the respondents at the commencement of each of the interviews, they were all promised anonymity concerning the information provided. Moreover, all efforts necessary to keep participants safe during the interview were observed.

Table 1 here

The analysis of the data was done using the principle of *qualitative thematic analysis* (Miles and Huberman, 1994) which involves a blend of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Apart from doing the necessary coding; charts and networks were used for teasing out the emergent themes. From these, relevant conclusions were made and the findings are reported below.

Validity and Reliability: Assessing the study's Quality and Rigour

It has been argued that the quality of scientific research conducted within a paradigm should be judged by its own paradigm's terms (Healy and Perry, 2000). Accordingly, the specific approaches for assessing the rigour of qualitative studies which were observed in the course of this study are those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985); Guba and Lincoln (1989; 1994); and Gaskell and Bauer (2000). As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Guba and Lincoln (1989; 1994) one of the basic criteria for assessing a qualitative study is its trustworthiness which entails *credibility, transferability, dependability,* and *confirmability.* These authors suggest that these criteria parallel the positivist criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in respective order.

The main issues in credibility are to ensure that the study is done in such a way that the probability of the findings being considered credible is enhanced and to demonstrate how credible the findings are by having them approved by the constructors of the social world that were studied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, the use of tape-recorders for the interviews, and respondents' validation address this. The respondents' validation as used in the study involved going back to the participants of the in-depth interviews after the transcription of the data to help confirm that the data actually represent what they said in the course of the interviews.

Transferability involves the question of whether the findings of the study hold in some other contexts or even in the same context at some other time (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). What is recommended by Lincoln and Guba in this regard is for the researcher to provide a thick description that would enable anyone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about the possibility of the transfer. According to Gaskell and Bauer (2000), one way of making thick description is verbatim reporting from sources. Accordingly, verbatim quotes from respondents are presented in the findings section of this paper to address this requirement. The parallel equivalent criterion for reliability in quantitative research which is about consistency in the research procedures is Dependability. Essentially, this involves that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process in an accessible manner (Bryman, 2004). In the words of Gaskell and Bauer (2000: p.346) '...clarity of procedures of data elicitation and data analysis are an essential part of quality research work'. In observance with this criterion, the procedures of data collection and analysis are clarified in this section

(See Table 1 and Figure 1). Confirmability is the issue of whether the researcher does not overtly allow his or her personal values or theoretical inclination to affect the conduct of the research and the findings that emanate from it (Bryman, 2004). In compliance with this criterion, efforts were made to ensure that guidance and direction during the interviews were kept to a minimum to avoid overtly influencing the findings.

Summary of Findings

There are a number of interrelated findings on the trajectory between entrepreneurial activities of African-Caribbean ethnic group in London and their membership of Pentecostal organisations. These findings are reported below.

African-Caribbean Entrepreneurship: The Associated Challenges

Although the key focus of this study is exploring how Pentecostalism and African-Caribbean entrepreneurship are intertwined, a number of themes on the challenges confronting African-Caribbean entrepreneurship in the UK are uncovered. The factors mentioned by the respondents can be categorised into: lack of mentoring arrangements for upcoming and new entrepreneurs as commonly available among other ethnic groups that are thriving in entrepreneurial activities (especially the Asians); poor entrepreneurial attitude of some African-Caribbean ethnic members, ethnic discrimination which they claim restricts the scope of African-Caribbean entrepreneurship in the society, and low patronage from co-AC members in the country. According to the respondents, these factors are closely interrelated and inhibit entrepreneurship engagements of those who have started and the would-be entrepreneurs among this ethnic group:

> The fact that one is Afro-Caribbean, it is hard enough to be taken seriously as a business person. We tend to be seen in the business world as second-class citizens in reference to who we are and what we do. Do I as an individual adhere to that? No. I believe that you can achieve what you want to achieve with God on your side (R6).

> I think another problem with people in our culture is that, maybe it's because of our past, which I will not want to go into, but we lack the self-confidence that we can succeed… But most of our people, and that's my opinion, still think that we are inferior, or minor… there's still that feeling of inferiority which prevents us, African Caribbean people from stepping out and doing what we've got to do, being what we want to be in life. I guess that's why many of our people chose to work for others. (R2).

Characterising African Caribbean Entrepreneurs in Pentecostal System

Faith in God

In relation to the problems militating against African-Caribbean entrepreneurship in the UK, respondents stress that their key survival strategy is their faith in God which forms the basic emphasis in Pentecostal faith-based organisations they belong. As indicated by the respondents, a variety of interrelated factors encapsulates their commitment to God and depicts the Pentecostal system. These are mentioned as belief in the efficacy of prayer, and payment of tithes and offering which all collectively sum up their relationship with God and strengthen their entrepreneurialism:

> Faith, prayer, and dedication to God are my secret…for business (R17)
>
> ... we have to serve {God} in whatever we're doing …Our work has to reflect Christ; every area of our life has to reflect Christ. Christianity is a life style and business cannot be separated from it (R9).

Integrity and Moral Standard

A convergent view of the respondents indicate that when compared to the larger context of African-Caribbean Entrepreneurship that is characterised with all of the stated problems, Pentecostalism in the UK sharpens members' moral standing and serves as the sanctuary for peace of mind. They claim further that, it is characterised with 'special trust' that exists among members with a sense of shared values that is believed to transcend what could be found in the African Caribbean larger entrepreneurship context or other forms of entrepreneurial engagements:

> What brings benefit …is when you are not greedy in business. You are not an extortionist, you don't over-charge people; you don't receive stolen goods and re-sell stolen goods... This is what the church teaches and we follow (R16).
>
> It is something I like to do and I take pleasure in doing it and I do it as unto the Lord... .. I pay my workers well, I treat my customers very well and they keep coming back… I make sure I pay tithes and offering and because of those things God has prospered my business (R15).

God's overall prosperity: the catalyst for entrepreneurial success

Overall, the key outcome of allowing Pentecostalism to drive respondents' entrepreneurial activities is identified to be divine prosperity which takes several forms as explained below:

> Yes, as a believer and being a business woman, I think I prosper because I put God first and in whatever I did, I sow seeds into God's work and ministries, [this] brings in a lot of benefits because when you give unto God, he gives to you even as he promised, great measures, shaken together and running over so when we give he opens the windows of heaven into our business and blesses us as believers (R6)

> Essentially, participants claim that their faith in God as shown in their commitment to serving Him in various ways enlarges their businesses and in turn enriches them as individuals.

Sales and Profits

Respondents affirm that their membership of Pentecostal faith-based organisations results in increase in sales volume, patronage, and profits. They consistently attribute their success in business (however little or much) to the kindness of God they enjoy for worshipping Him:

> Those who really know God will not doubt that HE is the only one who can increase sales and bring more business and profits. Bible says without Him we can do absolutely nothing (R10)

> I strongly believe that nobody receives anything except the Lord gives him, so my increase in sales and profits are from God (R1).

Networks

One of the key advantages that respondents believe are subsumed in their membership of Pentecostal faith-based organisations is the opportunity for networks. This opportunity to network among co-members of Pentecostal churches is noteworthy and greatly beneficial for these entrepreneurs. They believe that it gives them opportunity to reach some markets that would have otherwise proved difficult or impossible to access. Closely related to this is the opportunity to benefit from word-of-mouth communications (WOM):

> We are really connected…I promote my business through word of mouth, ...church is a perfect place for that, thanks to God (R13).

On this, respondents emphasise that their membership of Pentecostal churches gives them the opportunity to enjoy referrals as members who have been involved in transactions with them in the past freely introduce the business to other co-ethnic members in the Pentecostal fold:

> … The love in the church among brethren is one of the great benefits one cannot afford to ignore on this issue. It really helps (R12).

Besides, the special trust and bond with exist among members are significantly strong. They add to strengthen the credibility associated with recommendations made by members of the network:

> ... Actually it was one of the sisters in church that kept on talking to me about starting my own shop... So I got that push from her alone. It ended up being a good thing because guess what, I have a good number of clients from the church congregation itself (R2).

Competitive edge

Respondents indicate that as the business environment becomes increasingly competitive; African-Caribbean entrepreneurs are finding it difficult to cope in the crowded marketplace. However, they stress that their relationship with God as fostered by Pentecostalism provides them with spiritual competitive edge in circumstances where other businesses of non-members are struggling to cope or failing:

> As a Pastor who preaches the word and also has experience of business management, I can confidently tell you that the key ingredient or factor if you like, to compete successfully is good relationship with God Almighty (R18).

> Many more people are now going into this our business (Shipping agency), especially here in London… That is what people call the survival of the fittest. But, as a child of God, I can say surely, my business has been very positive even when all that we hear people say is that things are bad. My view is that, being on the Lord's side makes me a winner in business (R9).

Divine Creativity/Innovation

As innovation and creativity constitute part of the core factors in entrepreneurship, participants emphasised how their very good relationship with God through power of Holy Spirit enlightens them on new business ideas, new product development, and gaps in the market. According to them, many of these business ideas come through spiritual revelations, for example it is claimed that God discloses successful business investments to them through

dreams and a number of other ways which could not have been known without maintaining intimate relationship with God:

> People that I have known over the years that are believers in Jesus Christ and are entrepreneurs have faith, trust in God and are inspired to start some new ventures in business and to trust God to be able to help them in that new venture… as far as whether it is the right thing to do and also the right timing of things. I also enjoy this divine guidance (R20).

> Without the divine intervention, God knows that I will still be wandering about the city of London. The breakthrough that came to me 4 years ago was the idea to be on my own, to start this business…When it came, I knew …this must be from God…I think, it is about listening when God is speaking to you about something. I have waited and heard from Him. (R15)

Organized Enterprise Supports

The study clearly shows an evolving trend about entrepreneurship support in these Pentecostal churches in the UK. It shows that more and more Black Pentecostal churches now have various programmes specifically geared towards encouraging entrepreneurship. While in some churches, such programmes are centrally organised for the entire congregants, some other churches decentralise the management and operations of such skill enhancement programmes to various church segments to make them fit for purpose:

> …. my church is really into promoting entrepreneurs. We have lots of sessions and …training for people who are in business….like customer care, time management, and leadership, promotions and marketing your business; we had a few on guides to starting your own business and we have people from the church and from other churches who have successful businesses talk to us; and these sessions usually go year round…the church has set up this directory from within the church and apart from having contact details from other members… let's say if you need a plumber, you can check the church directory first to see if there is a plumber within the congregation. I think this is a good thing because you get a lot of promotion out of this (R8).

> To the glory of God, that is one of the things I can say God has used me for in this church. We organise training programmes that have helped brethren to enhance their business skills. We have some brethren who are our members that volunteer to do the training and also invite some from other parishes occasionally (R21).

By and large, the study shows that African-Caribbean entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs are confronted with huge challenges in the complex business environment. However, the research also suggests that, those that have joined the Pentecostal faith-based

organisations among this ethic group have shared various associated values with members. As shown in this study, the shared values in the Pentecostal circle serve as inputs that result in a number of valuable spiritual outputs (success factors) which enhance businesses owned and managed by these 'specially spiritually favoured' AC entrepreneurs. Hence, the argument advanced by the respondents is that as more and more AC ethnic members in the society embrace Pentecostalism, experience the associated advantages, the better will AC group in the society faired in general vis-à-vis entrepreneurship.

Discussion

This study unpacks the thickly blurred link between Pentecostalism as a thriving religious orientation among the African-Caribbean ethnic group and their entrepreneurial engagements. It shows that African-Caribbean ethnic group in a wider sense are confronted with some challenges which inhibit their expected accelerated business progress. Lack of sound mentoring arrangement, constraint of operating within very limited business scope, racial discrimination, and inadequate institutional support, are among the major problems highlighted in this study as constituting challenges to African-Caribbean entrepreneurs. This is an important finding not only because of the deep-rooted nature of these problems but also because it is strongly supported by previous studies ((Reeves and Ward, 1984; Ram *et al.,* 2002). For example, Nwankwo *et al*. (2010) emphasise the problem often confronted by Black Ethnic minority in obtaining support from the mainstream institutions established specifically for this purpose. Evidently, this present study suggests that there has not been any noticeable change in respect of this issue.

As African-Caribbean entrepreneurs face these limitations, expectedly, they strive to survive within the volatile and highly competitive environment by exploring various means.. This study suggests that many of them are turning to their faith – Pentecostalism – as the solution to the predicament.. The entrepreneurs in Pentecostal faith believe that their success is inextricably linked to their relationship with God, which is closely linked to their belief in the efficacy of prayer, strong commitment to paying tithes and offering, maintaining high moral standard in business dealings, which are values shared by members of this faith. Although, there are variations in the contexts and focus of the research, Kalilombe (1997), Dodd and Seaman (1998) and Taylor and Chatters (2010) are among authors whose studies strengthen the case that members of Pentecostal faith-based organisation use their faith platform to

obtain succour in various forms. Hence, this finding is evidently corroborated in the extant literature.

The attribution made by the entrepreneurs about the links between their membership of Pentecostal faith-based organisations and successes in business such as gaining competitive advantage, high sales and profits, creativity and innovation is noteworthy. This is closely linked to the key characteristics and values associated with Pentecostalism in which members have strong belief in prayer to solve business problems, faith as the antidote of business failure, and divine revelation for business ideas. This mirrors the "boss Christians" described by Cao (2008) in his study.

Networking is found in this study as one of the key benefits that member-entrepreneurs gain from the Pentecostal faith system. Although it is not specifically discussed in the context of entrepreneurship, Dodd and Seaman (1998) also confirm that stronger ties, trust, or friendship are likely to ensue among co-worshipers for practicing members of a faith. The study extends this understanding to how entrepreneur members of Pentecostal faith-based organisations use the existing trust and ties among members to develop their businesses and navigate the volatile and complex marketing environment. Moreover, some of the extant studies suggest that the existing mainstream institutions charged with helping SMEs appear not to be hitting the target effectively (Nwankwo *et al.,* 2010). Consequently, Pentecostal systems in the UK are now introducing various parallel programmes instituted to support members who are in business or aspiring to take the plunge.

These institutional supports are in the forms of business seminars, workshops on business management, start-up plans and many other related programmes. This is quite interesting as evident in how respondents described the value offered by these schemes. Conventional thought about entrepreneurship and Christianity may at superficial level question the involvement of churches in entrepreneurship which revolves around wealth creation. Nonetheless, this study establishes that members and Pastors in Pentecostal churches do not perceive this trend as contradictory to the core Christianity, as they argue that God supports prosperity. Besides, it is believed that when member-entrepreneurs benefit from the programmes, they will help the less privileged members in the church, be financially helpful to the church and eventually make the society more prosperous which is the plan of God.

Implications of the study

The implications of this study could be conceptualised from two forms – theoretical and managerial. From the theoretical standpoint, the study supplements the existing body of knowledge on ethnic minority entrepreneurship but extends it to a different context – Pentecostalism. It strongly emphasises the continuous relevance of cultural resources in boosting entrepreneurship in the society.

Evidence shows that government and some other stakeholders are concerned about increasing entrepreneurship (Ram *et. al.,* 2013). This study pinpoints one possible means by which this objective could be achieved. As the respondents of this study, who comprise of both pastors and member-entrepreneurs strongly believe in the tenets and values associated with Pentecostalism as a faith-based system, this religious platform could be used to reach them for various interventions such as training programmes, workshops, and other skill enhancement schemes that can foster entrepreneurship among the members. This approach can strengthen the in-house initiatives of these faith-based organisations. It is important to state that this implication relates more closely to the UK context because of the prevalent religious influence in the society. Ultimately, the overall impact of this on the economy is potentially huge, as more members of this faith/ethnic group in the society could be encouraged into entrepreneurship. Given that there are other faith-based organisations other than Pentecostalism, logically, these other platforms may also be used for this same purpose in ways amenable to these various systems. This is reminiscent of the marketing term of segmentation, targeting, and positioning in which the needs of specific group of people are met with specific offerings towards creating and delivering value to them effectively. Above all, this study could provide strategic directions on how to effectively channel available resources towards uplifting small businesses in the society.

Conclusions

The key focus of this paper is on examining how the African-Caribbean Ethnic group in the UK uses faith metaphor to steer their entrepreneurial endeavours. Although the link between business and religion has been previously established in the literature, the unique value of this article lies in the fact that it explores African-Caribbean entrepreneurship vis-a-vis Pentecostalism, a form of Christianity notably and commonly practiced by this ethnic group.

By and large, the research suggests that while the problems confronting African Caribbean entrepreneurs appear enduring, those who have embraced Pentecostalism are specially favoured by God in many forms in such a way that provides the needed insulation to survive in the complex marketing environment. Consequently, in the long run, this development is expected to brighten the fate of African-Caribbean entrepreneurship in the larger context.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

 Even though this study shed some light on the trajectory of Pentecostalism as a faith-based organization system and entrepreneurship engagement of members, its main limitations lie in the small sample size and the fact that the study was conducted only in London. These limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the wider population. Nevertheless, these concerns appear not to be very compelling since this study is not positioned for testing any specific hypothesis but to build a substantive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Given these highlighted limitations, further research is warranted into extending this study into other parts of the UK. Furthermore, it might be more exciting if future studies can specifically explore the topic in the context of African-Caribbean women entrepreneurship as such approach will likely extend understanding on whether there are gender specific findings about this topic. Similarly, it might be theoretically beneficial to also gauge the views of customers as well as the employees of these businesses owned by AC entrepreneurs who are members of Pentecostal faith-based organisations, on this issue. This research pathway is recommended for future studies.

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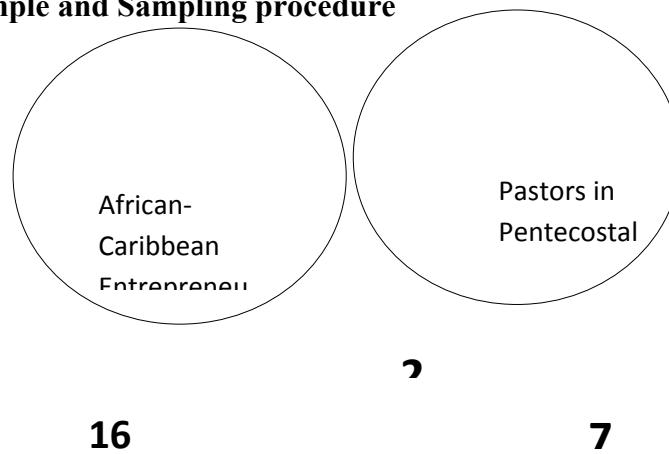
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Table 1: Respondents' Demographics

Respondents	Business Type	Number of employees	Years in business	Years as a pastor
R1	Catering	4	7	
R2	Barbing	3	4	
R3	Music writing/product	2	10/7	
R4	Miscellaneous service	2	2	
R5	Employment agencies, recruitment agency	5	12	
R6	Finance (Mortgage Broker)/Health & Social care	6	15	
R7	IT Technician	2	9	
R8	Hairdresser/Seamstress	3	9	
R9	Shipping Agency	5	12	
R10	Real Estate/ International Marketing	4	17	
R11	Social Enterprise/Family Counselling	3	6 months	
R12	Retail but with Catering experience	4	(Retail 18/Total in business 23)	
R13	Accounting	3	9	
R14	IT technician/E-commerce	1	6	
R15	Retailing (Clothing)	2	4	
R16	Retailing	1	14	
R17	Pastor/Business Owner (1 Counselling/1 Charity)	2	5	9
R18	Pastor/Owner of 8 different Businesses (Finance, HR, Counselling) and 2 Charities	20	22	25
R19	Pastor	N/A	N/A	15-20
R20	Pastor	N/A	N/A	34
R21	Pastor	N/A	N/A	39
R22	Pastor	N/A	N/A	27
R23	Pastor	N/A	N/A	19
R24	Pastor	N/A	N/A	3

R25	Pastor		N/A	N/A	10

Figure 1: Sample and Sampling procedure

African-Caribbean Entrepreneu...

Pastors in Pentecostal

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16   **7**

Table 2: Number of churches opening and closing 2008-2013 in each denomination:

	Angl-ican	Bap-tists	Indep.	Meth-odist	New churches	Pentecostal	Presbyterian	Smaller Denoms
Opening	0	+1	+104	+4	+256	+640	+9	+1,937
Closing	-324	-76	-112	-813	-4	-2	-183	-38
net diff.	-324	-75	-8	-809	+252	+638	-174	+1,899

Source: http://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/how-many-churches-have-opened-or-closed-in-recent-years.cfm

Table 3: Ethnic group by measures (London)

	Value	**Percent**
All usual respondents	8,173,941	100
White	4,887,435	59.8
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	3,669,284	44.9
Irish	175,974	2.2
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	8,196	0.1
Other White	1,033,981	12.6
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	405,279	5.0
White and Black Caribbean	119,425	1.5
White and Black African	65,479	0.8
White and Asian	101,500	1.2
Other mixed	118,875	1.5
Asian/Asian British	1,511,546	18.5

Indian	542,857	6.6
Pakistani	223,797	2.7
Bangladeshi	222,127	2.7
Chinese	124,250	1.5
Other Asian	398,515	4.9
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	1,088,640	13.3
African	573,931	7.0
Caribbean	344,597	4.2
Other Black	170,112	2.1
Other ethnic group	281,041	3.4
Arab	106,020	1.3
Any other ethnic group	175,021	2.1

Source: Census 2011, nomis official labour market statistics

http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS201EW/view/2013265927?cols=measures (Accessed, 24th October, 2014)

Table 4: AO9: UK Labour Market Statistic by Ethnicity; African-Caribbean Self-Employment data;

	Oct-Dec. 2012	Oct-Dec. 2013	Jan- March 2014	April-June 2014	July – Sept. 2014	Oct-Dec. 2014
Number in thousand	64	79	79	78	91	75

Source: Extract from Labour Force Survey, Labour Market Statistics Enquiries

Labour.market@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Table 5: Percentage of workers who are self-employed in each region and devolved country of the UK, April-June 2014, GB

	%	Change since 2008 (percentage points)
London	17.3	2.0 pp
South West	16.6	1.5pp
South England	15.8	2.0pp
East England	15.0	0.9pp
Wales	14.1	1.1pp
West Midland	13.7	1.9pp

North West	13.5	1.9pp
Yorkshire and the Humber	12.5	0.7pp
East Midland	12.1	1.0pp
Scotland	11.5	0.9pp
North East	10.8	1.1pp

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics (2014)

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