

Islam and Social Media Entrepreneurial Communications

The case of British Muslim Entrepreneurs and their use of social media to
identify markets and engage customers.

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, October 2018**

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Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife Mariam Nasir and my daughter Amelle who provided me with both inspiration and emotional support during my time as a PhD student. I would not have been able to carry out this research project without their continuous patience, encouragement and guidance.

I would also like to appreciate my parents, Syed Maqbool Hussain and Zuby Maqbool as they encouraged me to undertake this PhD program and supported me throughout this journey with their prayers and affection. As an entrepreneur himself my father has worked six days a week sometimes even on Sunday to make end meets and provide his family a better future. Their life long struggle, hard work, dedication for their children has enabled me to take the uncertain road of PhD and complete it on time.

In the end, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors Dr Tahir Rashid and Dr Morven Mceachern for their continuous support of my Ph.D. study, for their patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. Their guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having better advisors and mentors for my Ph.D. study.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of market identification and customer engagement. Previous academic research has argued that entrepreneurial actions are the outcome of individual characteristics, experiences and having the potential to identify market gaps and effectively utilize business opportunities. However, there is a lack of research on the role of individual beliefs (which form such entrepreneurial characteristics, experiences, and expertise) and its impact on entrepreneur's ability to identify markets and engage customers. At the same time, ethnic entrepreneurship literature has discussed the role of ethnicity and religion and its influence on entrepreneurial actions. Nevertheless, these academic studies do not consider how the integration of ethnicity, religion and local culture of the host society influence their entrepreneurial actions. Therefore, this study has selected British Muslim entrepreneurs as a context to explore and understand how the integration of religious belief (Islam) and local culture (British) influence their social media communications in terms of market identification and customer engagement. This study has used Effectuation theory as a theoretical underpinning to explore Ethno-religious entrepreneurial beliefs and its interaction with local culture as manifested in their social media communication activities. This is qualitative research and the researcher has conducted 26 in-depth interviews of British Muslim entrepreneurs and utilized thematic analysis approach to interpreting data. The findings indicate that Islamic beliefs and British cultural values provide an ethical and moral framework to participants that influence them in terms of market identification and customer engagement on social media platforms. The findings further indicate that participants identify markets by understanding the changing needs of British Muslim customers who want to consume products in accordance with Islamic beliefs and British culture. The participants use their personal and communal groups on social media and incorporate it with their offline networks to engage consumers. The content they share on these platforms is not limited to their product offerings but also includes uploading personal pictures, quotations, inspirational stories and positive customer reviews based on Islamic beliefs and British cultural values. The participants also share their personal and professional experiences with customers on social media and discuss and debate socio-economic issues related to British Muslims to develop long term relationships. The participants also use social media networks to resolve their communication issues, identify new market opportunities, develop co-marketing activities and seek guidance within the context of business in general and communications in particular. The findings extend Effectuation theory by adding the entrepreneur's religious beliefs (Islam) and local culture as an important ingredient that influences their ability to identify markets and engage customers.

Keywords: Ethnic marketing, Islam, British culture, British Muslim entrepreneurship, ethnic networking, Social media communication activities, networking, content marketing.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Chapter Overview

This thesis is concerned with the exploration of whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. The first section of this chapter will provide a background for this research study by outlining the relationship between religion, entrepreneurship and social media marketing. The second section will offer a rationale for the use of British Muslim entrepreneurs as the primary unit of research analysis. This section will also highlight the industry implications and identify the theoretical gap in Effectuation theory and how the main research aim will be able to extend it. The third section offers an overview of the methodological framework that would achieve the primary research objectives. The fourth section will outline the structure of the thesis including its various components.

1.2 Research Background

As stated by Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2009), religion is increasingly becoming a social and cultural force in many countries across the globe. The belief in God offers individuals with a sense of not being alone; provides a reason for their existence and give them hope and strength to face day to day challenges (Flood, 2012).

The growing importance of religion is not limited to the individual's inner self, but one could see its benefits in entrepreneurial business activities. Apart from providing spiritual support to the business owner during uncertain times, religion also provides network resources to entrepreneurs based on similar ethnic and religious experiences (Jamal et al., 2015). Various academic studies have discussed the positive role of religious networks in North American and

European societies (Ratten *et al.*, 2017). These studies propose that religious beliefs and networks fixated to a specific school of thought have the potential to bring entrepreneurs together and provide them with the opportunities to grow their business in terms of market identification and customer engagement (Ratten *et al.*, 2017).

Also, the emergence of social media as a communication platform has provided both mainstream and ethnic entrepreneurs various opportunities regarding market identification and customer engagement (Qualman, 2010). The digital medium provides entrepreneurs with cost-effective ways to reach consumers and enhance two-way communication (Qualman, 2010). The total number of people who are using social media in the UK has reached 40 million and projected to go up by 42 million users (www.statista.com, 2018).

The usage of social media among the ethnic minorities in the UK is higher compared to the majority Caucasian (Townend, 2008; OfCom, 2013). This high percentage of social media usage among ethnic consumers is one of the main reasons why ethnic entrepreneurs are increasingly using social media platforms to market their products and services to their communities in the UK (Jamal *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, the cost-effective nature of social media gives entrepreneurs the ability to locate their niche markets and compete with large organizations in terms of market identification and consumer engagement (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013; Kaplan, 2012). Especially within the context of ethnic entrepreneurship, social media allow businesses to identify and engage ethnic markets, which are unreachable by mainstream media such as TV, radio, and newspapers (Anwar & Daniel, 2016).

Therefore, this research is an attempt to explore the growing relationship between religion and entrepreneurship within the context of social media marketing. The researcher has selected British Muslims as a unit of analysis for this research since they identify more with their

religion as compare to their ethnicity and one can see the influence of Islam on their daily lives (Zibiri, 2014).

This is an academic exploratory study which examines the social media marketing activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. Existing research has indicated that ethnic entrepreneurs are limited to specific offline industries (e.g. restaurants, taxi grocery stores, accountants) (Jamal et al, 2015). There is one academic study conducted on the online retail ethnic businesses (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). In this research they indicated that ethnic entrepreneurs are not limiting themselves to established ethnic businesses but using digital media to enter new industries (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). They call for further exploration of the emerging ethnic industries on digital media to extend ethnic entrepreneurship research.

Therefore, this research does not limit itself to any specific industry since restricting oneself to the specific industry would make it difficult for this research to explore the emerging businesses of ethnic entrepreneurs on social media platforms. Moreover, social media has provided an equal playing field to entrepreneurs in terms of starting their business and identifying and engaging new markets in a more effective and efficient way as compared to conventional marketing (Smith et al, 2017). Therefore, it is important for researchers to focus on the emerging dynamics of social media platforms regardless of any specific industry to overall assess how current social media platforms shape and reshape traditional marketing and its effect on entrepreneurs.

At present, the researcher has briefly provided the background of the research by discussing the influence of religion on entrepreneurship and its emerging relationship with British Muslim entrepreneurs and social media marketing. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the reason for selecting ethnic entrepreneurship in general and British Muslim entrepreneurs in particular.

1.3 Rationale for Research

The reason why the researcher has selected ethnic entrepreneurship is that it is one of the fastest growing business fields in the United Kingdom (Haq, 2015; Dhaliwal, 2004). Ethnic entrepreneurs are twice as likely to initiate business activities in the UK as compared to their mainstream counterparts (Basit, 2017; Hasan, 2011). These businesses are growing faster than mainstream businesses and outperform them by declaring more profits, export rates, and can survive even in poor economic conditions due to their networking support from their community (Haq, 2015).

The UK economic downturn initiated in early 2008 had less impact on the ethnic business as they use their ethnic and religious resources and networks to identify new markets and engage customers as compare to their mainstream competitors (Jamal et al., 2015; Rhodes, 2013; BIS, 2010). Also, ethnic business due to their similar ethnic and religious experiences identify their ethnicities as their primary target market which provides them with an opportunity to locate markets gaps more quickly as compared to their mainstream counterparts (Jamal et al., 2015; Jamal, 2005; Jamal, 2003).

The growing population of ethnic groups in the UK, along with the rise in their living standard are some of the reasons that persuade entrepreneurs to initiate ethnic entrepreneurial activities (Basit, 2017). The rise of ethnic entrepreneurship also has a positive effect on the stagnant British economy since “it is providing more job opportunities to the people and in turn stimulating national productivity” (Teixeira, 2001, p. 2056).

Previous academic research has viewed ethnic entrepreneurship from a minority perspective by examining the influence of ethnic and religious beliefs on entrepreneurial actions. These

studies argue that ethnic entrepreneurs identify more with their ethnic and religious background as compare to their host society culture, and one must study ethnicity and religion to explore and understand ethnic entrepreneurship (Ram et al., 2017).

However, there are studies within the ethnic identity literature which argues that an individual's identity is not limited to their ethnic and religious beliefs, it also incorporates host society culture that continuously shape and reshape who they are (individual beliefs system) (Zibiri, 2014). Hence, this research is an attempt to explore the minorities belief system (within the context of ethnic entrepreneurship) by examining how the integration of host society culture and ethnic and religious beliefs influence an entrepreneur's ability to identify markets and engage customers.

This idea of individual beliefs (originating from one's religion and host society culture) and its ability to influence entrepreneurial action resonate with effectuation theory since it argues that who is the entrepreneur (individual beliefs) including social institutions such as education and family influence their business actions (Nielsen & Lassen, 2012). However, there is a lack of research on how individual belief influence entrepreneurial actions. Therefore, this research will extend the effectuation theory by arguing that the integration of individual's Islamic beliefs and their British culture influence their entrepreneurial action.

In addition, the rise of social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) have provided entrepreneurs with the ability to compete with big business in terms of market identification and customer engagement (Qualman, 2010). As stated by Smith et al (2017), there is a difference between offline and social media marketing since the latter provide more innovative and cost-effective ways to identify and engage customers as compare to the offline marketing. Nevertheless, existing academic literature on ethnic marketing is limited to the offline marketing activities of entrepreneurs within the context of brick and motor industries

such as restaurants/takeaways, grocery stores, clothing, accountancy and information technology (IT) Catney and Sabate, 2015; Altinay and Altinay, 2008; Basu, 2011; Jamal, 2005; Masurel et al., 2004). There is lack of research on the social media communication activities of ethnic entrepreneurs and how they are using their host society culture and their religion to identify markets and engage customers (Anwar & Elizabeth, 2016).

The reason behind the selection of British Muslim entrepreneurs as a main unit of analysis in this study is that the British Muslim community is composed of various ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Pakistanis, Indian Africans, and Arabs, etc.). However, they identify more with their religious and British culture as compared to their ethnic background (Zibiri, 2014). Therefore, one can argue that British Muslim entrepreneurs as a context would allow us to negate the conventional view of considering ethnicity in isolation and make it susceptible to the local currents in the form of Islamic religion and local British culture.

Another reason for selecting British Muslim entrepreneurs is the global Muslim consumer segment which is one of the fastest growing markets in the world in terms of disposable income (Temporal, 2011), internet penetration and mobile phone usage (Wiest & Eltantawy, 2015). The rise of the new Muslim middle class was due to the improvements in their socio-economic conditions and their willingness to become part of the global consumer culture (Sandikci, 2011). The Muslim ethnic population in Europe in general and the UK in particular, is showing improvement in its socio-economic development and rise in its purchasing power (Muslim Council of Britain, 2013). The UK also has one of the highest Muslim ethnic population (3 million). The combined spending power of Muslims in the UK is £20.5 billion, and they contribute £31 billion to the UK economy annually (Muslim Council of Britain, 2013). According to Shelina Janmohamed, Vice-President of Ogilvy Noor "*British Muslims is a segment crying out to be served*" and described them "as a young, brand conscious, well-connected and increasingly affluent consumer segment" (Muslim Council of Britain, 2013, cited

in Wright, 2013, p.8). The rise in the disposable income of the Muslim consumer segment, their digital savviness and their desire to integrate Islamic and western consumer culture makes them a lucrative potential market to be explored by both ethnic and mainstream businesses (Ogilvy & Noor, 2014).

Furthermore, the Muslim minority group is the largest religious/ethnic group in the UK and identified themselves as both British and Muslims (The Muslim Council of Britain, 2015). The second and the third generation also identify themselves as British Asian and Muslims and give low priority to the identity of their home country (Jacobson, 2006, Hamid 2011). They are mobile and social media savvy and want to live their lives in accordance with British consumer culture while keeping their traditional Islamic values intact (Jacobson, 2006). Islam also has a considerable influence on their personality and consumption practices (Wright, 2013). Yavuz (2010) argues that Muslims are portrayed as irrational religious people whose primary aim in life is to resist the democratic and capitalistic values of the west. He asserts that this traditional view might represent certain sections of Muslim populace, but it is not at all a fair representation of those Muslims entrepreneurs who are integrating Islamic values with western forms of capitalistic economy in order to gain material and spiritual success. He states that the study of Muslim entrepreneurs and their primary target market, which consists of the Muslim consumer, has the potential to alter views of Muslims by the west as anti-modern or anti-capitalists. In addition, British Muslim entrepreneurs perceived themselves as an overlooked minority due to the prevailing racism in British society that limits job assurances and hopes for a better future (Portez & Böröcz, 1989, Zhou, 2004). Hence, the rising Muslim middle class will not only open the doors for financial success, but it may also improve the image of Muslims in the minds of the mainstream population (Alserhan, 2011).

1.5 Research Gap

At present, academic research has studied entrepreneurship from an ethnic perspective and do not consider various factors from the mainstream environment in the form of government, market, mainstream culture and religion (Ram et al., 2017). This study has attempted to extend ethnic entrepreneurship literature by examining the integration between ethnic religion (Islam) and host society (British) culture on entrepreneurial actions in general and their social media communication activities. Also, current ethnic entrepreneurship research has only been conducted on ethnic entrepreneurs and their use of ethnic and religious networks to achieve their business objectives. However, there is limited research work on those individuals who identify less with their ethnicity and more with their religion and local culture. Therefore, the researcher has selected British Muslim entrepreneurs as a unit of analysis to conduct this study since they are ethnically diverse (British Pakistanis, British Indians, British Arabians, British Blacks and more) but identify themselves as more British and Muslims.

Furthermore, this academic study has explored the communication activities of ethnic entrepreneurs within the context of social media and examine the role of their mainstream and religious networks that provide them with a competitive edge in the market. The study has also claimed that due to social media, minority entrepreneurs do not only depend on their geographically limited ethnic and religious resources to identify and engage customers as previously assumed in ethnic entrepreneurship literature. The participants in this study due to their British Muslim background also utilize their extended Muslim networks (both Muslim minority and majority countries) and local mainstream resources (e.g. social trends) to identify new markets and engage customers.

Previous ethnic entrepreneurship literature has studied the role of ethnic and religious networks on business. However, by using Effectuation theory, this study has attempted to explore the

individual religious belief of entrepreneurs and how it influences their social media communication activities. Effectuation theory argues that who is the entrepreneur (individual beliefs) has a direct impact on entrepreneurial actions. However, the theory does not provide an in-depth understanding of who is the entrepreneur. Therefore, this research further contributes towards effectuation theory by arguing that individual religious beliefs and local cultural values play a vital part in the development of the question of who is the entrepreneur and how it influences entrepreneurial actions.

The research further extends effectuation theory within the context of marketing by arguing that entrepreneur's personal experiences in the form of their religious beliefs and local culture can influence their social media communication activities. The findings also argue that social media networks based on the similar religious beliefs and local culture has the potential to create an entrepreneurial community for both personal and professional benefits. This study also provides managerial implications for both ethnic and mainstream entrepreneurs by suggesting that online networks based on similar beliefs and values have the potential to provide entrepreneurs with both business and emotional support especially in uncertain environment. The similar beliefs and values add to the existing academic literature on social media marketing and networking that only consider similar professional experiences and network norms as a supporting mechanism for both ethnic and mainstream entrepreneurs (Smith *et al.*, 2017; Quinton & Wilson, 2016).

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

To explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of market identification and customers engagement.

Research Objectives

1. To understand Islam as a religion and its teachings on entrepreneurship.
2. To explore how British Muslim entrepreneurs, identify market opportunities and segment consumers by using social media platforms.
3. To explore the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of customer engagement.
4. To analyse whether there is any relationship between Islamic belief and the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs.
5. To investigate the communication barriers faced by British Muslim entrepreneurs when targeting consumer markets and how they resolve them.
6. To extend effectuation theory by adding religious beliefs as one of the factors that influence entrepreneurial actions.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The key aim of this research is to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. In order to answer this

question, the author has divided this report into eight chapters in the form of Introduction, Literature Review (religion), Literature Review (Entrepreneurship), Literature Review (Entrepreneurial Marketing), Methodology, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion.

The next three chapters are comprised of current academic literature review regarding Religion, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing. The reason behind dividing the literature review in three separate chapters is to provide necessary focus and ease to the reader. These chapters will also include academic literature review related to Islam, ethnic Entrepreneurship and ethnic marketing including social media marketing. The literature review aims to explore and assess the academic material related to the three variables mentioned in the research question in the form of Religion, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing. In the fifth chapter, the researcher has developed a methodology for the thesis based on the studied literature review. The topics discussed in this chapter include identifying the most appropriate research philosophy, data collection, analysis and storing methods. In the subsequent chapters, the researcher has discussed the findings of the fieldwork (qualitative in-depth interviews) and provided discussion. The last chapter will conclude the research and offers research limitations, implications, recommendations, and future research scope.

Chapter 2 Literature Review (Religion)

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Key themes elicited from literature review

The aim of this research is to explore how Islam influences the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of market identification and customer engagement. To answer this question, this research has examined academic literature on religion, entrepreneurship, and marketing through the lens of effectuation theory.

Existing research within the context of effectuation theory consider individual traits, family and educational institutions as the main factors that influence entrepreneurial actions (Nielsen & Lassen, 2012). By drawing from ethnic entrepreneurship and ethnic marketing literature this literature review seeks to explore if there are other social institutions such as ethnicity and religion of the entrepreneur which may influence their entrepreneurial actions; more specifically social media communication activities.

The Key themes elicited from the literature review indicate that various religious beliefs (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) encourage entrepreneurs to work for individual and societal benefit by providing an ethical and moral framework to conduct business activities (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013; Temporal,2011). The literature maintains that an entrepreneur's personal experiences originating from their individual characteristics, ethnicity, religion and cultural traits also have the potential to influence entrepreneurial actions in terms of market identification and customer engagement (Jamal, 2008, 2005).

The literature further indicates that ethnic entrepreneurs start off from their ethnic business then expand it into mainstream markets for further growth. These entrepreneurs limit themselves to specific industries (e.g. food businesses, grocery stores, and transportation) due to lack of education and understanding of local culture including rules and regulations (Jamal et al, 2015). However, the first and second generation of ethnic entrepreneurs are venturing into non-ethnic industries such as accountancy and IT firms due to their education and understanding of local cultural context. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on other industries where ethnic entrepreneurs are ventured into especially within the context of social media McPherson (2007).

Furthermore, ethnic marketing literature state that ethnic entrepreneurs do not conduct market research or utilize digital media to market their products and believe that transactional and relationship marketing is enough for business growth. Nevertheless, the first and second generation of ethnic entrepreneurs is using social media, conducting market research and using relationship marketing for business growth (Anwar & Daniel, 2016).

The growth of social media and its ability to provide cost-effective ways for entrepreneurs to identify markets and engage customers is one of the main themes in this research. Existing research on social media suggests that more and more entrepreneurial businesses are using social media networks to identify new markets, develop collaborative opportunities and seek marketing guidance based on similar professional experiences (Gustafsson & Khan 2017), Wang et al, 2016; Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). These businesses are also using content marketing (functional and emotional) to engage customers and develop long term relationships (Lee et al., 2018). Social media research within the context of ethnic entrepreneurship and marketing is very scarce and briefly consider ethnic resources as a way for entrepreneurs to identify new markets and engage customers (Anwar & Daniel, 2017). There is a lack of

research on how ethnic entrepreneurs are using social media networks and content marketing to identify markets and engage customers.

2.1.2 Chapter overview

This chapter will explore the literature review regarding the relationship between religion and economy from functional perspective. The first section has discussed the sociology of religion and examined its various perspectives. This section has identified two main sociological lenses through which one can view religion in the form of functional and substantive approaches. The reason why the researcher has selected functional approach is because it allows the researcher to understand religion as a social function that can provide economic framework for societal development.

In the next section, the researcher has discussed various religious beliefs on economy from functional perspective including the guidance they provide on economic activities. Since the main research aim of this thesis focuses on Islam, therefore, in the next section the research has reviewed the origin of Islam and its teachings on the economy. The last section will examine the emergence of British Muslims as a single community based on Islamic belief system and British cultural values in the UK. Figure 2.1 shows the Religion literature framework for this chapter and how various religious beliefs provide ethical and moral guidance to economic development in society.

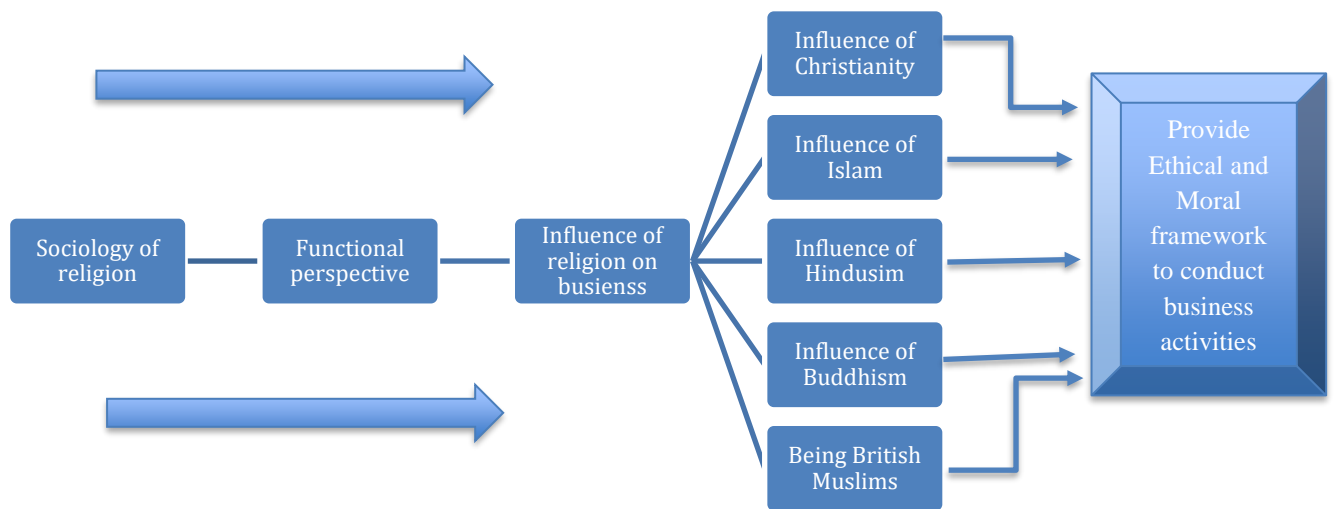


Figure 2.1: Religion literature framework.

2.2 Sociology of Religion

According to Haralambos and Holborn (2013), there is no one way to define religion due to the diversity in religious beliefs specifically. For instance, the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) define religion in terms of belief in the one God or monotheism while Hinduism allows its adherents to manifest God through various deities. There are some religions such as the religion of *Dugum Dani* (who live in the Highlands of New Guinea) or Buddhism where God is absent, and there are religions such as Scientology which believe that human being, in reality, are God but have lost their ways due to their thoughtlessness.

Due to the different beliefs held by these religions, it is not easy to produce a universal definition of faith. However, there are two approaches adopted by academics to tackle this issue in the form of functional and substantive definitions (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

Functional approach defines religion in terms how it is used by individuals and society on a practical level. Yinger (1970), provides an example by defining religion as “*a system of belief and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problem of human life*” (p.7). However, Himilton (2001), has identified a significant issue with this definition. Firstly, this definition takes into account a variety of beliefs and practices. For example, communism also has a system of belief and practices which allow it to provide a solution to human life problems, but at the same time it rejects the notion of religion and considers it as a tool used by the ruling class to oppress the proletariat (Himilton, 2001).

One of the prominent supporters of the functional perspective of religion was Emile Durkheim (1912), who believed that the social life of the human being is not possible without set moral and ethical values that shape collective conscience. If there are no such values, exist then the society would not be able to attain social cooperation, control, and stability that is necessary for its long-term survival. He states that religion reinforces societal integration and strengthens collective conscience and allows a group of people to differentiate themselves from other communities. He further argued that the use of religion as a sacred symbol or representation of the community makes these communities not only worship the sacred symbol (in the form of God or anything else) but society as well.

The critics of Durkheim such as Dawson (2011) argued that his study is based on a small number of Aboriginal communities that he cannot generalize as something, which represents every religion. Others believed that he is overstating his argument since religion in small communities can act as an important instrument to promote collective social values and attain

social solidarity. However, he does not take into account the complex dynamics of modern societies which consist of many ethnic, social groups including diverse sub-cultures with their distant moral and social codes.

Like Durkheim, Malinowski (2013), also agreed with the notion that religion strengthens social solidarity, but he disagrees with the idea that religious values always work in the interest of the people. He argued that religion could create social and political issues for the people as it supports the oppressor against the oppressed. He gives the example of Christianity and argues that the appeal of this religion for the oppressed classes lies in its promise for these people that the world is a testing place for them and they will reap the rewards of their misery and anguish in the next world (Heaven). The promise of Heaven gives Christianity to gain more adherents and provide people hope for a better tomorrow if not in this world then the next one. This form of contentment of the people in this world persuades them to maintain the status quo and dilute any self-ignition to change their personal and social circumstances.

Marx provides a more detailed version of this argument by declaring religion as “*opium for people*” (Marx & Engels, 2012). He considers religion as a mechanism of social control used by the elitist class to exploit working class, reinforce class system and dilute in them any chances to revolt against their oppressors. He argues that religion requires its followers to accept suffering as an integral part of God's plan for its adherents. The acceptance of suffering as ordained by God nullify the ability of the people to revolt against the elite class and consider the oppression as a way to attain salvation in the next world (Marx & Engels, 2012).

However, it has been witnessed that religion is not always used by the elite class to maintain status quo, but it can also provide an impetus for change (Maduro, 2005). For example, Engels in his book on the history of early Christianity identified parallels between the early Christian sects and their ability to revolt against the Roman Empire with socialist and communist movements

(quoted in Haralambos & Holborn, 2013). He states that Christianity and socialism both got hold of the masses through sects. Although Christianity came into being as a way for the people to recoup with the stress of the oppression, it can also become a source of resistance against the oppressors and create positive change in society.

According to Parsons (1965), Substantive perspective suggests that the social system of society provides norms, beliefs, and values which guide human action and create stability in society. As stated by Haralambos and Holborn (2013), "*the norms which direct action are not merely isolated standards for behaviour: they are integrated and patterned by cultural system, values and beliefs*" (p. 434). For instance, some of the norms one identifies in western society are clear evidence of the existence of materialism in societies. Since religion is an integral part of the culture, therefore, the moral and ethical guidelines it provides has a direct impact on the actions of those societies.

Both of the perspectives mentioned above have their way to explain the phenomena of religion. However, to give more weight to one over another might hinder one to appreciate religion in its holistic manner. The reason behind this could be that Substantive religion deals with the content of the religion while functional approach deals with the utility of religion for its followers both of which are necessarily important for understanding the sociology of religion (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

As stated by Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2009), religion is turning into an important social and cultural force in several countries including industrialized nations. It has a vital role in the daily lives of people around the globe (Flood, 2012). The belief in God gives its followers a sense of not being lonely; provides a reason for their existence and the strength to face challenges (Flood, 2012). The 21st century has witnessed the rise of religiosity among individuals both in the developing and the developed world (Singh, 2013).

The reasons behind the rise of religion in the West are many, but mainly it is the outcome of the increase in immigration (Cesari, 2013), uncertainty resulted from globalization (Bauman, 2001, Singh, 2013) and revolution in communicational technologies (Campbell, 2012). The unpredictability caused by the process of globalization has forced people to come up with collective cultural and religious identity (Castells, 2011). At the same time changes in informational technology have brought people closer together and allowed them to grow mutually by sharing religious ideas and experiences (Appleby & Marty 2004; Beyer 2006; Kinnvall, 2007).

Furthermore, globalization has enhanced individual and collective identity problems and resulted in the divisions among people on the bases of race, religion, class, and ethnicity (Castells, 2011). Communicational technologies have also decreased physical communications among people and limited them to their mobile communication devices, thus resulting in the kind of environment that is uncertain, insecure and had isolated people from each other (Turkle, 2011).

2.3 Religion and Economy

As stated by Elfakkhani and Ahmed (2013), the growing influence of religion among individuals is not only limited to their inner life but has also entered into their social and economic lifestyle. For example, the growth of Islamic entrepreneurship is a prime example of how religion affects the commercial activities of Muslims around the world.

Islamic consumer market is one of the fastest growing markets in the Muslim world, especially in the western societies that carry sizeable Muslim population and has a higher rate of Muslims seeking consumer products that are in line with Islamic principles (Temporal, 2011). There is an increase in multinational organizations and small and medium level entrepreneurs who are

realizing the potential of Islamic consumer lifestyle and coming up with Islamic products and services that are enabling their business to grow in the current market environment (Ajala, 2018; Temporal, 2011).

The growing relationship between religion and the modern capitalistic system requires one to understand the reason behind this behaviour in order to determine the place of spirituality in the 21st century. Therefore, one should first discuss whether there is any relationship existing between religion and economy and how both of these terms affect entrepreneurship.

The relationship between religion and economy is not given its due attention within the academic circles (Gauthier, 2016; Audretsch *et al.*, 2007). However, due to the emerging influence of religion in the modern day society, interest in the role of religion on the capitalistic market is growing. The importance of religion in the capitalist market economy can be well explained by Melten Friedman (2011), as he argues that the origins of the modern-day capitalistic economy cannot be traced back to the Enlightenment movements of the 18th century which gave rise to secularism and initiated the process of modernization in Europe. Instead one can find its origins “*in the controversial changes in religious belief in the English-speaking Protestant world*” (p.2) which indirectly influenced founders of current economic thought such as Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson and more.

Weber argued that religion (Protestantism) plays a vital role in the economic development of western society (Arslan & Chapman 2001). He further states that the doctrine of predestination was transformed by Calvinist church into a Protestant work ethic that resulted in the construction of modern day capitalism (Predestination is a Christian doctrine which suggests that the God due to his knowledge of past, present and future continuously guide those followers who are destined for salvation) (Adas,2006).

Weber also points out traits such as honesty, charity, work ethic, thrift and hospitality to strangers, which one uses in one's professional life, are influenced by religion, and the enhancement of these traits by the latter would allow greater opportunity for investment and economic growth (Weber, 2013). Although Weber never proclaimed that Protestantism is the only way to gain economic success, he always stressed that the values as mentioned above enforced by protestant religion had a positive impact on the expansion of capitalistic economy (Zulfikar, 2012).

Boettke (2011), extended this view by discussing the relationship between spiritual capital (a form of social capital which is associated with the internalization of religious beliefs) and economic growth. He postulated that spiritual capital promotes the values of honesty, universal humility, need for forgiveness, respect for property, trustworthiness, appreciation of talent, and hope for the future. This form of capital allows individuals to decrease transactional cost involve in business since they already have this belief that the other person also follows the same religious principles. Nevertheless, he also warns that if those religious beliefs preach envy and hatred towards others than those societies will find it challenging to gain economic success (Boettke, 2011).

In contrast to the views of Weber, Boettke, and Friedman, some academics disagree with the notion that religion has any form of influence on capitalism or economic development. Prominent among them is Marx who strongly contended that the origins of everything in society, which include various social structures in the form of religion, government, and family, are dependent upon economy or mode of productions. Therefore, he argues that religion cannot influence the economy, but it is the other way around (Fromm, 2014).

Furthermore, some academics present a secularism thesis that states religion has an adverse effect on economic growth. For instance, McCleary (2008) argued that societies, which

participate more in ritual religious activities, are prone to less economic development. She contended that with increased incomes, life expectancy, better education, increase in one's value of time due to employment are the indicators of economic development in any society causes individuals to become less religious and more secular. In addition, the allotment of time and resources to religious activities instead of commercial activities and religious restrictions in the form of prohibition of interest rates has the potential to reduce economic growth among religion-based societies (2008).

Hence, by carefully analysing the arguments presented by the authors mentioned above one can draw a mixed conclusion that religion does play an important part in the development of modern day economic system. Religion infuses values among people, which provide them with a foundation to initiate commercial activities for the individual benefit (Arslan & Chapman 2001). Nevertheless, the high level of religious participation and specific religious values (e.g., prohibition of interest) can limit potential economic growth in a particular society (McCleary, 2008).

As stated by Harpaz (1998), religious values have considerable influence on both economy and the workplace (Harpaz, 1998). They further point out that religion is one of the very important factors in the rise of modern-day capitalism (Weber, 2013). However, industrialization and the idea of the separation church and State created bifurcation between them (Pine and Gilmore, 2011).

Pine and Gilmore (2011), state that separation of church and State gave rise to a viewpoint that religion is a private matter which had no place at the workplace. Religion was considered a private activity that has no place in economic life. The rise of an industrial era that gave way to the evolution of the organizational development process has strengthened this viewpoint and

made religion a taboo subject at the marketplace. Pine and Gilmore (2011), consider the separation as the direct result of the mentioned factors.

In the context of Industrialization, Pine and Gilmore (2011) used Weber's concepts of organizational bureaucracy, rational economic activity atomization and emphasized division of labour and specialization to justify their argument. In other words, it means a worker is supposed to follow a strict set of guidelines at the workplace and prefer technical competence to human subjectivity and was taught to be objective in organizational evolution and promotion matters (Koch, 1993).

According to Miller and Ewest (2010), this kind of thinking resulted in the creation of such industrial society which was “*dominated by rational repetitive labour, job fragmentation, increased worker output, and militaristic taking of orders*” (p.4) in order to sustain economic development. In such society, a worker was supposed to leave his/her, spiritual beliefs or any subjective reasoning at home since the role of thinking was left up to the managers (Pratt *et al.*, 2013). This form of bifurcation created a split in the lives of employees as their employers required them to suppress their spiritual cravings in order to achieve “*instrumental rationality*” (Weber, 2010) at work (Pratt *et al.*, 2013, Weber, 2010).

This form of mentality was taken to the next stage of the industrial economy that is service economy. However due to the massive layoffs and constant reorganization in the 80's and the 90's changed that paradigm s (e.g., Izzo & Klein, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Burack, 1999; Cash *et al.*, 2000). The workers soon turned to their religion for stability and comfort in the times of economic uncertainty including job insecurity. The authors mentioned above believed that their current situation of job distress is the result of not incorporating religion in all parts of their lives including work (Mohamed *et al.*, 2001).

In addition, the organizational consultants and high-level executives realized the oppressive and stultifying effects of such organizational structures on worker's wellbeing (Pratt *et al.*, 2013). They further argue that this caused them to explore and identify such organizational models that enable employees to use all parts of their self at the workplace in order to increase productivity and personal wellbeing (Pratt *et al.*, 2013).

Academics such as Covey (1989), Senge (1990), Block (1996), and Porter and Kramer (2006), hoped for a new paradigm in the market that could allow people to bring their entire self to the workplace in order to attain both organizational and personal benefit. Although these academics never use the term religion or spirituality overtly, the initiation of such an approach has opened the door for religion due to the part it plays in the lives of the people (Pratt *et al.*, 2013).

According to Zaidman *et al.* (2009), it would be unnatural to suggest that one can incorporate spirituality or religion at the workplace since the two terms conflict with each other. Spirituality and religion are all about the individual's internal connection with others, his/her environment and with God (Carroll, 1998). It is a process that is an end in itself, and it is connected with intangible things (Zaidman *et al.*, 2009).

Zaidman further argued that spirituality at the workplace means that one has to agree with the assumption that an employee has an inner life. This internal life yearns to find meaning at the workplace that can give them a reason for their existence through their work and create a transcendence link with their environment and God in order to attain internal satisfaction (2009). In this context, organizations are responsible for providing such environment to their employees who help them attain their spiritual goals and help employees create a positive difference in society through their work (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

On the other hand, corporations emphasize upon results and tangibles. Instead of giving value to support interconnectedness among employees and their environment these organization advocates “*competitive struggle to commodify human activity for the marketplace*” (Zaidman *et al.*, 2009. P.598). These organizations also define their employees as someone who has a specific role to play at their jobs as per organizational values. This kind of organizational attitude not only creates discomfort among employees but also makes them less productive and loyal towards their employers (Zaidman *et al.*, 2009).

Therefore, many of the academics mentioned above argue that in order to resolve current organizational challenges one has to incorporate the whole self at the workplace. There cannot be a split within the self since it makes it difficult for one to use one's potential at the best of his/her ability. The majority of the religions in the world have provided their solutions to resolve these challenges. They have given their unique perspectives on economy and workplace in the form of rules and guidelines and urged its followers to follow those rules. Some of these perspectives are mentioned below.

The relationship between religion and the marketplace is not limited to the Protestant religion as stated by Weber (2009), but it also includes alternative religions prevalent around the globe (Miller & Ewest, 2010). For instance, Redding (1995) conducted a study of 72 Chinese executives and entrepreneurs based in south-east Asia, Shanghai, and Hong Kong in order to understand that how their cultural beliefs affect their business practices. His findings suggest that Confucianism plays a vital role in the economic activities of these individuals. Confucianism values such as collectivism, paternalism, social hierarchy, and feminism create a base that these individuals use to create and foster businesses. In the same line, Cheung and Chow (2006) identify luck, fate, religion, personal philosophy, and ultimate life values as important factors in the success of young Chinese entrepreneurs in Hong Kong.

The religious values promoted by the Torah in the Jewish religion provide a clear set of guidelines for employers and employees to meet workplace challenges and resolve management issues (Kay, 2012). Torah emphasizes the value of justice, equality, dignity, mutual trust and respect among both employers and employees and urges them to express these values not only in theory but practice (Case & Smith, 2012).

The Jewish religion has given ethical standards and moral framework to manage employees at the workplace with integrity (Droff & Newman, 2008). Judaism is not against the free market economy and wealth creation but requires its followers to obtain it through honest dealings and use it for the social welfare of the needy (Kay, 2012). The Talmud urges its followers to not limit their actions to the strict accordance to the Jewish law but move beyond its limitations for the sake of doing the right thing. In other words, it means performing acts that are not only lawful but also ethical.

Similarly, Judaism preaches its followers to combine its teachings with work. *“Whoever does not teach his son a trade, it is as though he taught him to commit robbery”* (Kiddushin 29a); *“All Torah that is not combined with work will eventually cease and lead to sin”* (Avot 2:2). *“Even God did not let His presence rest upon Israel until they had performed some work”* (Avot D’Rabbi Noson 11:1 taken from Friedmen, 2001).

The Jewish religion does not provide specifics on business ethics but provides a framework that result in the development of a favourable environment for both workers and managers and provides them a strong work ethic to engage in the mutual welfare (Friedman, 2001). The significance of business ethics in Jewish scripture can be known from the fact the very first question which will be asked to the individual on the day of judgment would be whether they were fair with their business dealings in the world or not? (Friedman, 2001).

In the same light, Christianity does not negate but endorses moral and ethical standards set by the Old Testament in regards to the business activities. As stated B, "*do not think that I have come to abolish the laws or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil*" (Matthew 5:17). Christianity promotes the spirit of the law more than the law itself. It provides a clear set of guidelines regarding the relationship of the follower with the marketplace. "Do your own business and work with your own hands, that you may walk honestly with those who are without and that you may lack nothing" (Thessalonians 4:11-12).

Christianity has also focused on developing a strong ethical and moral character amongst its followers (Parboteeah *et al.*, 2009). They further argued that Christianity stresses love and service, forgiveness, just dealings, truthfulness, showing humility and realizing the value of every human being. At the same time, it discourages lies, deception, laziness, and the pursuit of selfish interest.

The use of parables (short stories with moral lesson) by Jesus has given people the understanding of the just dealings in economic interactions. In these stories, Jesus provided a framework that can help resolve employer-employees' issues, including the benefits of good work ethics, benevolence, agency, vigilance, and service in the business. Just like the Jewish religion, Christianity also stresses on the act that is considered more important than the mere preaching of religious ethics and morality.

As stated by Parboteeah *et al.* (2009), there is a positive relationship existing between Hinduism and work values. Unlike Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) Hinduism is not much concerned with the historical events or the event of the founders of these religions. Instead, it focuses on the Brahman, the ultimate truth and reality, and the Gods of the Hindu religion. They are the epitome of such reality and truth (Ludwig, 2001).

Moreover, the Hindu moral and ethical framework comes from the philosophy of Karma and Dharma. Karma is the actions of a person in his/her previous life that will have an impact on their current life. Dharma, on the other hand, is the responsibility of a person towards his religion, people and the environment (Ludwig, 2001).

These philosophies urge Hindus to become responsible for their actions since it will have consequences on their destiny and rebirth (Gupta et al., 2002). In order to live a good life, Hinduism proposes the attainment of four aims (duties), *karma*, *Dharma*, *Moksa* (achieving liberation), and *Artha* (material prosperity). The last aim *Artha* compels the Hindus and prompts them to attain material success through *Dharma* and *Karma* at the workplace (Parboteeah et al., 2009).

Parboteeah et al. (2009) argued that the attainment of all these aims is achievable through their caste system. Although many people negatively view cast system, it is this very caste system which made it easier for them to understand their responsibility and their life purposes. "It is feasible to expect that *Hindus are also likely to view their work as a responsibility to their caste and ultimately to the collective interest*" (p.57). Moreover, one of the most prominent books on Hinduism Bhagavad-Gita informs the reader that work is one of the ways to become closer to God (Fisher, 2005).

In contrast to the Abrahamic religions which pay more attention to life after death, the Buddhist religion gives more emphasis to human suffering in the world and how one can be free from it (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2008). The reason behind this suffering is the false desire or craving among people that forces them to spend their lives in achieving such goals that cannot give them permanent happiness. In the same way, greediness in business has the potential to enhance such suffering since it is a kind of activity that has no end.

According to Gould (1995) and Nanayakkara (1992), one can notice a positive relationship between Buddhist teaching and economic activity. For instance, Buddha considers poverty as the direct result of the decline of one's ethical behaviour in a community and laziness as something that should be discouraged at any cost (Cullen and Parboteeah, 2008).

Buddha describes a work ethic that is based on good behaviour, persistence, and initiative driven mentality and striving for betterment (Niles, 1999). However, the main objective of Buddhism is to attain internal satisfaction as compared to the material one. Therefore, Buddhism promotes intrinsic work values (finding meaning at work, social welfare) and encourages adherents to create work-life balance for inner harmony.

Inoue, (1997) argued that the Buddhist business approach prefers the integration of economics and moral which is the prime essence of intrinsic work values. It tends to avoid any conflict with the greater good of the society, urge people to help each other and advocate environment-friendly business policies.

The religious scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism provide a clear set of ethical and moral behaviour one must adhere in one's social life. These religions foster values which are not limited to one's inner life but transcended into the economic sphere and provide followers the way to make sense of their lives and their relationship with the environment.

As stated above these religious beliefs support the pursuit of material well-being but at the same time ask their follower to create a balance between materialism and spiritual wellbeing. As stated before, the incorporation of these values at the workplace has the potential to resolve ongoing economic challenges in the form of unethical business practices and create an environment which could result in collective human progress.

There are academic studies that have pointed out the positive role of religion over economy and entrepreneurship. However, it would be out of the scope of this research to discuss every religion in detail and its impact on the economy and entrepreneurship. Therefore, the researcher has selected Islamic religion as a research context in this study to explore the relationship between Islam and the economy. Hence, the next section will provide further discussion on the Islamic beliefs and values and its impact on the economy.

2.4 Islam

According to Aslan (2011), there is no one way to define Islam since the definition of the term is relative to the subjective understanding of the reader and depends on their unique social context. As stated in his book *No God but God*, “*religion is, by definition, interpretation; and by definition, all interpretations are valid. However, some interpretations are more reasonable than others. It is the reason, not imagination, which determines what is probable and what is not*” (p.12).

Therefore, one can argue that the words in the traditional scripture of *Islam* (such as *Quran*) can be universally acceptable since Muslim considered these words literally as a word of God but its interpretation is multiple, context-based and evolutionary. Islam is an Arabic word which means submission to one God. Here submission means that a person must have an unflinching belief in the presence of omnipotent God who both the creator and the sustainer of everything and consider Muhammad as a messenger of God.

As stated in the Quran, God (or *Allah* in *Islam*) which created heaven and the earth and Human being in his image and gave them the title of *Ashraful Makhluqat* (Greatest of all Creations). Hence, it is the responsibility of the Muslims to use this gift as a way to become closer to *Allah*

by following sacred scriptures such as *Quran* and *Sharia* (teaching derived from the life of Prophet Muhammad).

Five basic pillars are the foundation of *Islam*. These include Belief in one God, praying five times a day, fast in the holy month of Ramadan, give charity to the needy and go for pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime. These five pillars constitute the essence of *Islam* and are mandatory for all Muslims to regulate their lives in accordance with these principles.

As stated by Ramadan (2004), the last four pillars (praying, Zakat, Fasting, and Hajj) are the practices or rituals through which one attain the first pillar (faith in one God). As stated by John Renard (1996), “*the Pillars are not meant to reduce the spirit and life of a complex global community to a cluster of religious practices.*” In other words, it means that the main objective of these pillars is not merely to follow the rituals, but also to reconfirm their belief in the unity of only one God and Muhammad as the last messenger of God (Ramadan, 2004).

As stated by Aslan (2011), the origins of *Islam* dates back to 7th century when prominent Businessmen in Hijaz (modern day Saudi Arabia) named *Muhammad Bin bn ‘Abd Allāh* got fed up with the social injustice happening in *Makkah* and started making journeys to the nearby mountains for self- meditation. It is during one of these journeys that he heard the voice of Gabriel (the messenger of *Allah*) who told him that Allah chooses *him* as his messenger to communicate to the people the true message of God and protect them from the suppression of the oppressed.

Aslan (2011), further argue that this event was the starting point of a social revolution that in the next few decades removed Abbasids and Byzantine Empires from power and extended its borders to the territory that in modern day is known as the Middle East. The reason behind the triumph of *Islam* in its initial years was that it was successfully able to initiate and execute social and economic reforms. Unlike, their predecessors (Arabic Tribes) who merely gave lip service to Justice and equality, the Muslims implement these values on the ground level. They

gave inheritance rights to women and orphan which was unheard of in *pre-Islamic Arabia*. They were also able to replace the Arabian law of retribution (which demand an eye for an eye as a form of justice) with universal values of patience and forgiveness (2011).

2.5 Islam and Economy

Academics consider *Islam* against capitalism or economic growth (Weber, 2013; Guiso *et al.*, 2003). They argue that *Islam* is “*anti-market*.” and its teachings are the primary reason for the lagging economic condition of the majority of the Muslim countries (Stefan Voigt 2005, p 66).

As stated by Shamsuddin (2014), the prohibition of “*Riba*” or interest rate as hostile to economic progress, whereas others consider the collection of *zakat* as limiting the ability of the people to attain socio-economic progress (2014). However, as stated by Noland *et al.* (2004), *Islam* is not the direct reason behind the economic turmoil faced by the Muslim countries. The reason could be that “*Islamic religious tradition or other cultural or historical experiences may have affected the development of local institutions or conditioned local attitudes on a wide range of issues that could indirectly affect economic performance*” (Nolan *et al.*, 2004 p 140).

The primary sources from which we can shed light on an *Islamic* perspective on economy and entrepreneurship is *Quran* and *Sunnah*. Muslims believe that *the Quran* is a Book of *Allah* and consider as the first line of reference to understand the meaning of life and actions. The *Sunnah* is the sayings and deeds of which Prophet Muhammad that the Muslims are supposed to follow if they are not able to solve their issues through *the Quran*.

The other secondary sources after *the Quran* and *Sunnah* are *Ijma* (Consensus) *Qiyās* (Analogy). *Qiyas* is a kind of analogical reasoning, which is to some extent contested and debated among religious scholars. *Ijma* is the unanimous agreement among religious scholars

who belong to the same school of jurisprudence. These sources have the potential to influence entrepreneurial behaviour and their environment.

Now, there are two contemporary schools of thought which try to explain the relationship of *Islam* with modernization and economic development. The first school of thought views *Islam* as a static religion that opposes innovation and economic development and considers *Islamic* values as barriers in terms of bringing reforms that for the successful development of entrepreneurial culture (Coulson, 1964; Labohm, 2003; Perkins, 2003; Pipes, 1983). The adherents of this school of thought consider that non-western cultures must break away with their values and traditions and incorporate western culture in order to attain socio-economic progress. They argue that the reason behind the economic success of western economies is their cultural attitude in the form of individualism, democracy, secularism, and freedom of action and expression. Therefore, if any non-western culture wants to uplift their economic condition, they have to adhere to these western values.

The second school of thought believed that *Islam* is compatible with modernization and economic development (Kayed & Hassan, 2010). They argued that *Islam* proactively supported economic development and modernization and led global modernization when the west was in the era of dark ages. Ernest Gellner(1983), a British social anthropologist negated the assumption that non-western societies cannot be modernized without western cultures and its values. He stated that *Islamic* teachings are not against modernization and argued that *Islam* is closer to modernization as compared to the other two monotheistic religions (Judaism and Christianity) (Gellner, 1983).

In *Islam*, there is no separation between the temporal and spiritual world of the follower, since *Islam* provides clear guidance and a roadmap for a follower to use in all spheres of his or her life (Nadwi, 1978). Cantori and Lowrie (1992) stated that the religion of *Islam* gives more

importance to society as compared to the state. Hence, the ethical parameters of the society are not decided by public vote or by state officials but by the *Quran* alone. As stated by Chapra (1992), *Islam* encourages socio-economic justice and brother/sisterhood and advocates a comprehensive balance between materialistic and spiritual needs of the follower.

In addition, all the actions of a Muslim including commercial activities are considered as worship to God if they are in accordance with the *Islamic* code of ethics and morality (Al-Faruqi, 1992). Therefore, if a Muslim is engaged in any form of business activity in accordance with *Islamic* law, which results in both individual and societal benefit than it can be interpreted as a form of worship to please God and attain salvation.

Islam provides a clear guideline and ethical framework on the economy due to its impact on human relations and societal development. Al-Misri and Keller (1991) pointed out that many of the basic contemporary guidelines on the economy are derived from *Islam* for many centuries. For instance, *Islam* provides a clear framework for forming business relationships, allocation of wealth and distribution, financing tools, consumption, fair trading, tax and many more. Rice (1999) argued that in order to overcome the economic challenges in our contemporary society we need to get rid of “*value-free economics*” (economic decisions based on hard facts and do not take into account human values) and pay more attention to the “*human-oriented system*.” He points out that *Islam* provides one with a “moral filter” based on Justice (*Adalah*) that stand for equality within society, unity (*tawhid*) which means a belief that one is accountable to God and trusteeship (*Khilafah*) that enable people to enjoy the goods God has entrusted upon them. This form of moral filter help followers to resolve contemporary social-economic issues successfully and live life in accordance with God’s will. He also argues that *Islam* has already created production priorities that enable followers to satisfy their needs first and then satisfy their materialistic needs and desires.

Beekun and Badawi (2005), has conducted a study, which discusses the *Islamic* ethical system from the viewpoint of the stakeholders that include suppliers, buyers, employees, debtors, and competitors. They mentioned three foundations for *Islamic* ethical system:

- The first pillar is justice which influences the follower to live a balanced life;
- the second is trust (*Amanah*), which makes followers answerable in the after-life based on their trustworthiness on earth;
- The third is benevolence (*Ihsan*) which is about excellence.

Hence, in *Islam*, every transaction in commercial affairs must be dealt with and executed in accordance with the teaching of *Quran* and *Sunnah*. Therefore, one can say that the pursuit of work or entrepreneurship is the main reason behind the creation of men in *Islam* and salvation can be achieved through “*servicing the consumers and the society in a fair and judicious manner*” (Elfakhani and Ahmed, 2013, p.59). However, failure to comply with the teachings of *Islam* can result in societal grievances and chastisements (*Quran* 24:63, 11:101, 11:102).

2.6 Being British Muslims

At present, the author has critically analysed the academic literature on religion and economy and discussed. However, one question, which is still unexplored, is related to who are these British Muslim entrepreneurs. Since there is no academic research conducted on British Muslim entrepreneurs; therefore, the researcher will explore British Muslims in general and how to they identify with their ethnicity, religion and host society culture.

The first reason the selection of British Muslims is that one needs to limit oneself to a particular religious minority group in order to increase the reliability and validity of the research findings.

The second reason behind this is that this particular study is about exploring the influence of Islamic beliefs on the marketing activities of Muslim entrepreneurs in the UK. Although Muslim minority in the UK is multi-ethnic and culturally diverse, its adherence of same religion

(Islam) and its persistence to make it the integral part of their individual and cultural identity makes it a single community.

In addition, academic research suggests that British Muslim are increasingly integrating Islamic belief system with their local British values. This integration is in accordance with functional perspective of religion that suggest that individual identity is not only based on one's religious content (substantive) but also based on the environment (British). Existing research looks at British Muslims through a sociological perspective by exploring how the integration of the Islamic belief system and British cultural values influence British Muslim identity. However, there is a lack of research on British Muslim entrepreneurs and how the integration of their religion with local cultural influence entrepreneurial actions. Therefore, in the next paragraphs, the researcher will attempt to discuss academic studies on British Muslim identity in order understand how British Muslims perceived themselves with their religion and local environment.

As stated before, before the discussion of British Muslim entrepreneurs, one first has to make sense about what is meant to be British Muslims living in the UK. As stated by Jacobson (2006), there is not an easy way to define being British or Muslim since both of these terms carry a different meaning for different people. She interviewed young British Muslims regarding their identity. During this interview, the majority of the participants revealed that they identified themselves as British, Muslims and less with their ethnic identity. The young British Muslims consider their religion as constant while their ethnic traditions and the culture of the host society is subjected to change (Jacobson, 2006).

This form of identity is in accordance with the findings of Modood (2007), who states that Muslims in the UK identify more with their Islamic identity. However, other contextual factors including social differentiations influence the way Muslims in the UK express their identity, including "*the dominant narratives of national identity*" (Dwyer 2000, p. 476).

Meer (2008), takes this argument further by adding that “*Muslim identity has not existed in a social and political vacuum in Britain, but has instead been shaped in dialogue with its context*” (p.65). For instance, the growing number of British Muslims perceive their identity in the context of the repercussions of the political events such as 9/11 and 7/7 on their lives.

According to Bullock (2002), Islamic identity cannot derive solely from *Quran* and other Islamic texts such as-Sunnah and Sharia law due to its multiple interpretations. “*According to the Islamic paradigm, although God sets the Islamic theology, Islamic application is affected by cultural interpretation and hence is culture-specific*” (Wilson & Liu, 2011, cited in El-Bassiouny, 2014.p.46).

Meer (2008), attempted to resolve this issue by arguing that it is not necessary that the Islamic scripture is the only way to determine the identity of the Muslims. One can also define Muslim identity in terms of “*quasi-ethnic sociological formation*” (p. 66). Meer further state that a Muslims does not necessarily have to define oneself as per the religious text alone, but they can also define themselves in terms of gender, geographic locality, ethnicity, race, sex and agnosticism (Ahmad & Sardar, 2012).

Therefore, the identification of an individual as a Muslim is due to their unique interpretation of religion which is defined by their ethnic specific context and local cultural experience (Modood, 1997). In addition, it is not necessary for ethnic minorities to define their identity in terms of the ethnic culture cultural practices of their ethnic group because some ethnic members associate symbolically with the ethnic identity without following its norms and values (Modood, 1997).

As argued by Younge (2005), ethnic individuals have a right to decide what identity they want to pursue. However, they are influenced by the existence of social institutions in society which may compel them to attain a particular set of identity (Younge, 2005). In other words, one can

choose one's identity, but sometimes an identity chooses an individual and force them to act in a particular way. For instance, one of the reasons why British Muslim who are born and raised in the UK retain a specific aspect of their religious and ethnic identity is because of the rejection and isolation they face from the mainstream population (Meer, 2008).

Hence, British Muslims are someone who is integrating their Muslim, British and ethnic identities. They have the freedom (to some extent) to choose their identity and feels that one does not have to follow the core cultural practices in order to attain a particular identity. One can also be symbolically attached oneself to a particular group without following their norms and value system or follow and re-interpret these values as per their interest. However, it does not mean that an individual is free in terms of self-identity formation since various social institutions affect the way individuals perceived their self-perception.

If ethnic identity is about the integration of ethnic and host society values with one's religious values, then the question is whether values are universal or they are geographically or culturally specific. The following paragraph will address this topic and whether one can differentiate between British, ethnic and Islamic values? Also, to what extent British Muslims are negotiating these various values as part of their core identity.

In order to understand how Islam influence British Muslim entrepreneurs one first has to separately look into the terms of being British and Muslims and then assess its influence on entrepreneurs. In non-statutory advice to both private and public schools in the UK, Department for Education (2014), provided a mandatory guideline for the promotion of "*fundamental British values and explains how this can be met through the general requirement in the 2002 Act*" (p.3). The values include (and not limited to) the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect, freedom, tolerance between different faiths and beliefs (Home Department, 2011).

In this context of this key requirement in schools, one can assume that these values might have some form of influence on the daily lives of British Muslims (who are born and raised in the UK) including their identity and social relationships. For instance, the practical implication of the value “*individual liberty*” would be to encourage students to think critically, independently and become reflective in their approach. The value of individualism is although is advocated in *Quran* (Jafari & Süerdem, 2012), seldom practice in the Muslim world where the emphasis is on collectivism and the discouragement of individualism (Triandis, 2013). Therefore, one can assume that a value such as individualism is a core British value since it is not only advocated but is also practiced by the people.

On the other hand, values such as responsibility toward community and family are although is considered as universal values both in the west and the Muslim world. However, one can see its implementation more Muslim world as compared to the western world. Hence, due to its implementation in the Islamic world one can determine it as core Islamic value. Here, one can argue that the British welfare system promotes the value of community and responsibility. Nevertheless, in the context of this study, the researcher is defining the values that come directly from the people not enforced by the government.

In the context of British multicultural society, British Muslims are in a unique position and considered as best of the two worlds. The reason behind it that most of them who are born and raised in the UK have been taught the values of democracy, the rule of law, individualism at the schools and they learn core Islamic values such as responsibility towards family, the community at home (Zebiri, 2014).

The editor of Q-News (a leading Islamic lifestyle magazine in the UK), Fareena Alam, describe British Muslims as someone who “*has a greater propensity to associate with the culture of the indigenous white majority and adopt many of its traits* (cited in Zebiri, 2014. p.34)”. However,

Young British Muslims do not rely on their ethnic or western values but integrate them in accordance to their life situations and experiences. They admire British system of the welfare state, caring of citizens, general prosperity and well-organized affairs of the State and describe it as the main reason why they do not want to move to their parents' home countries since they lack such values and quality of life (Zebiri, 2014).

Zebiri (2014), in her book British “*Muslim converts: choosing alternative*” provide an example of the integration of British values with Muslim values. Growing number of British Muslims are using values such as critical analysis to study Islam and using it to redefine the boundaries which differentiate them from traditional Islamic and cultural beliefs and practices of their home countries (2014). For instance, a growing number of Young British Muslim girls are urging their parents to let them pursue the same educational opportunities that their male siblings are undertaking. They proclaim their right by being expressive (British Value) and use gender equality value promoted by Islam to justify their right to have access to Higher education. Here, they are resisting the ethnic, cultural value of their parents that give more importance to the education of males as compare to female offspring (Zebiri, 2014).

In addition, British Muslims are considered more expressive and have higher expectations from both political and religious leaders as compare to the Muslims living in the Islamic states. They believe in individual liberty that allows them to resist discrimination and assert their rights, unlike their passive immigrant parents who have been brought up in the Islamic world mostly under undemocratic and repressive regimes (Zebiri, 2014).

Zebiri (2014), pinpoints that the age of digital media has allowed Young British Muslims the freedom to rely more on their independent reasoning as compared to mere following the traditional religious authority. Zebiri further adds that this is in contrast to the majority of

Muslims living in the Islamic world where the reach of the internet, English language, and limited political freedom make it difficult for them to acquire an alternative understanding of religion and society (2014).

Moreover, Islamic upbringing at home and British environment are not the only criteria to judge the individual values and perspective of British Muslims. The cultural and ethnic tradition of these Muslims also has a strong influence in their daily lives. These cultural values vary from ethnicity to ethnicity and can have a significant influence on the way they integrate Islamic and British lifestyle. For instance, Jamal (2005) has argued that cultural values such as hard work, commitment to work, working long shifts and spending one's life for the sake of one's family differentiate British Muslim south Asian entrepreneurs from other Muslims and the majority.

Therefore, it would be quite difficult to distinguish between British and Islamic values among Muslims since it depends on their religion, physical environment and the traditional culture of their families. However, growing number of young British Muslims are integrating British values with Islamic and their particular ethnic values. Although values are considered universal, their implementation on the ground level differs among societies and cultures and can be considered their unique belief system and cultural values.

2.7 Summary

In this section, the researcher has discussed two-main school of thoughts on sociology of religion in the form of functional and substantive perspectives. The researcher has used functional approach as a theoretical lens to view the relationship between religion and economy. The key themes emerged from this section inform the reader that there is no one

universal definition of religion since individual's reading of it is subjected to multiple interpretations based on their unique cultural and religious experience. Mainly, adherents use religion to resolve their societal and after-life concerns (functional approach) and others use it as a moral and ethical code that govern their daily lifestyle (substantive approach).

Another key theme identified in the literature argue that religion is associated with the development of modern day economic system and the values it teaches has a positive effect in the expansion of economic well-being of society. The literature further highlights that religion has a economic function (functional approach) in the stability and development of society. More specifically, various religious beliefs support economic development by providing a moral and ethical framework that support economic well beings of its adherents.

For instance, the religious scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism provide a clear set of ethical and moral behaviour one must adhere in one's social life. These religions foster values that are not limited to one's inner life but transcended into the economic sphere and provide followers the way to makes sense of their lives and their relationship with the environment. These religious beliefs support the pursuit of material well-being but at the same time ask their follower to create a balance between materialism and spiritual wellbeing.

In addition, this section also discussed Islam and its teachings on economy and identified two overarching themes in the academic literature. The first theme in the literature identified Islam as the hindrance when it comes to economic development and modernization and advise to follow western/capitalistic policies to pursue economic growth. However, the other school of thought consider Islam compatible with capitalism and argue that by following Islamic guidelines on can achieve economic success and social prosperity.

The incorporation of Islamic belief system as a moral and ethical framework is also visible among Muslims living in the UK. These Muslims integrate Islamic belief system and British

values in their daily life (functional approach). Moreover, Islamic upbringing at home and British environment are not the only criteria to judge the individual values and perspective of British Muslims. The cultural and ethnic tradition of these Muslims also has a strong influence in their daily lives. At present, the researcher has discussed the importance of religion and its growing relationship with the economy. In the next chapter, the researcher will examine the academic literature on entrepreneurship, its various perspectives and relationship with ethnicity and religion.

Chapter 3 Literature Review (Entrepreneurship)

3.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter will attempt to understand the phenomena of entrepreneurship by presenting and evaluating its various perspectives including Effectuation theory. It will further examine the impact of culture and religion on entrepreneurship. The second section will discuss the relationship between ethnicity and entrepreneurship. The third section of this chapter will more closely review the Islamic teachings regarding entrepreneurship and discuss its growing significance in the current market environment. Figure 3.1 provide a conceptual framework for this chapter and how entrepreneurship literature has been examined within the context of effectuation theory.

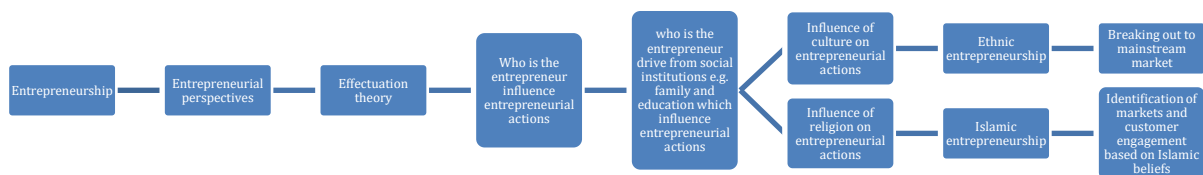


Figure 3.1: Entrepreneurship literature framework

3.2 Entrepreneurial Perspectives

As stated by Jones & Wadhvani (2006), the academic work on entrepreneurship started in the 1930's. However, the topic was given its due attention in the 70's due to various reasons. The main reason was the decline in economic activity worldwide, which resulted in the loss of jobs in different business sectors. The rise in unemployment and the inability of the large organization to boost economic productivity persuaded academic circles and government policymakers to look for alternative ways to resolve the economic challenges (Van Stel *et al.*, 2005).

To comprehend the role of entrepreneurship and its connection with marketing in today's environment one first has to understand its meaning. To define entrepreneurship is not an easy task since researchers find it difficult to accept anyone concrete definition of this term (Ozkan, 2014, Davidson 2004; Hill & Levenhagen 1995). However, from time to time scholars have given various interpretations of entrepreneurship ranging from personal characteristics and actions of an entrepreneur to identification and utilization of entrepreneurial opportunities (Venkataraman, & Shane, 2000; Van Burg and Romme 2014). Academics have also emphasized the influence of culture (Audretsch & Lehmann, 2016; Obschonka *et al.*, 2015) and religion (Modood & Metcalf, 2016; Weber, 2002) on entrepreneurial activities. These various perspectives provided below provide a broad conceptual framework of entrepreneurship theory and allow one to view the field from multiple perspectives.

Cantillon was the first economist who introduced the concept of entrepreneurship in the economic literature of business, economics, and commerce (Murphy *et al.*, 2006). He argued that the entrepreneur is someone who takes a risk by paying a pre-arranged price for a product in order to sell it again to make a profit (Cantillon, 1931). This kind of activity provides new business opportunities for individuals and also results in stabilization of demand and supply

mechanism in the market (Bula, 2012). However, he considered entrepreneur as a single economic agent and did not consider them playing an important role in the production process.

Jean-Baptiste Say expanded Cantillon's concept by placing "*the entrepreneur at the core of the entire process of production and distribution*" (Herbert & Link, 2009, pg., 17). He thought of an entrepreneur as an economic agent who unites the means of production (land, labour, and capital) in order to create a product. He also argues that the financial incentive entrepreneur secures after paying the rent of the land, cost of labour and interest on capital will be their profit (Say, 97). However, Say emphasis on the management aspects of entrepreneurship alone and turns the entrepreneur into a mere "*a superintendent and an administrator*" (Herber & Link, 2009, p. 19).

Schumpeter (1934), on the other hand, provides a unique perspective on entrepreneurship that was more in line with the changing mode of production in the industrial age. He perceives entrepreneurs as innovators who are more interested in changing the rules of the game as compared to just taking the risk and managing their businesses. An entrepreneur is someone who creates something new or uses the existing products to do something creative for the commercial benefit through "*creative destruction*" (Schumpeter, 1934). Although his theory provides an alternative perspective in entrepreneurship literature, he limited his entrepreneur to someone who only innovates and leaves out the rest of the market that use already existing innovations to create entrepreneurship opportunities (Venkataraman, & Shane, 2000).

Kirzner extends the argument made by Schumpeter by adding that one does not have to be an innovator to become an entrepreneur (1973). In his views, an entrepreneur is someone who is alert and always ready to anticipate market inefficiencies and convert it into profit-making opportunities (1973). He considered the majority of the entrepreneurs around the globe are imitators and not innovators since they imitate and reapply the market innovations in diverse

contexts. The theories presented by Schumpeter and Kirzner have contrasting views on entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, they both considered entrepreneur as an individual who has the potential to identify and turn market opportunities to their advantage.

Drucker (2014), further contributed to this view by arguing that the entrepreneurship is about continuously looking for new ideas and taking risks to implement them for a profit. The moment one identifies an idea; one can turn it into an opportunity to exploit and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace (Drucker, 2014). The mindset and actions of the entrepreneur must reflect their willingness to take a risk by putting their financial security and career on the line in the name of an idea and invest capital and time to turn that idea into a lucrative business (Drucker, 2014). They must possess unique entrepreneurial characteristics such as acceptance of risk and failure and has an internal locus of control in order to become a successful entrepreneur (Shapero, 1982).

The existing academic literature suggests a positive relationship between innovation and entrepreneurship. It further argues that on a national level, entrepreneurship has become an important alternative for nations to combat economic stagnation due to their innovative mechanism (Frederiksen *et al.*, 2016). However, there are academic studies that which argue that one overlooks the fact that entrepreneurial activities are also being identified as the prime reason for the global economic crisis in 2008 (Jones & Murtola, 2012). According to Jones & Murtola (2012), the most important tenet of entrepreneurship is innovation or what Schumpeter (1934), has termed creative destruction. Nevertheless, the financial instruments (e.g., asset-backed securities, credit default swaps, collateralized debt obligations (CDOs), and increasingly complicated methods for "*trenching debts*" which are blamed for the economic crisis of 2008 are also considered innovative in its field, but they ended up by bringing destruction in the market instead of collective economic progress (Jones & Murtola, 2012).

In addition, these authors argue that the replacement of past economic practices with innovative and efficient alternatives may help some entrepreneurs to attain market success. However, they do not take into account millions of other workers who suddenly find themselves out of work due to their dependence on previous economic structures that are destabilized by the creative destruction of some of the market innovators (Jones & Murtola (2012). For example, the closure of manufacturing plants is the prime example of how new economic practices due to globalization resulted in the loss of jobs of thousands of factory workers in the UK.

The adverse outcome that may arise from entrepreneurship does not mean that the one should ignore the positive contribution it has towards society. The term entrepreneurship has multiple interpretations depending on how people view it and in what context. From time to time both academics and market practitioners re-interpreted this term and bring new innovative entrepreneurship models that not only benefit the individual but also play a positive role for the collective benefit and advancement of society. Nowadays entrepreneurs are increasingly using alternative models of entrepreneurship that include social entrepreneurship and sustainable entrepreneurship. The reason behind it is to create a new form of businesses whose sole purpose is not limited to making the few on the top rich but to create a kind of business environment which equally look after the interests of the individual entrepreneur, society and environment.

According to Seelos & Mair (2005), “*Social entrepreneurship creates new models for the provision of products and services that cater directly to basic human needs that remain unsatisfied by current economic or social institutions*” (p.243.). Unlike traditional forms of entrepreneurship that work on self-interest, social entrepreneurship is about identifying market opportunities which are not only in the interest of entrepreneurs and enables them to bring positive change in their communities (Venkataraman, 1997). Social entrepreneurship

identifies opportunities that are missed by traditional entrepreneurs by improving systems, developing solutions, and devising innovative business approaches (Seelos & Mair, 2005).

The cause promoted by social entrepreneurship also has its implications. For instance, much of the social entrepreneurship literature focuses on the heroic characterization of the individual social entrepreneur while restricting their ability “*to learn from processes of entrepreneurial failure*” (Light, 2006, cited from Dacin *et al.*, 2011. p.1205). It also pays less attention to the social work of NGO's and for-profit organizations.

Moreover, social entrepreneurs are considered as the saviours of the world due to the assumed self-less economic activities they pursue to bring social change in the society (Dacin *et al.*, 2011). However, the literature on social entrepreneurship pays less attention to the conflicting interest of the individuals that create a gap between their proposed social mission and their real intention (to maximize profits or to attain political mileage) (Dacin *et al.*, 2011).

The sustainable development entrepreneurship model includes those entrepreneurial initiatives that are environmentally friendly and work for the development of a sustainable planet (Dean, & McMullen, 2007). The sustainable entrepreneurship model differs with social entrepreneurship model (Dees, 2001; Mort *et al.*, 2003) since the former focuses more on the mission (people-oriented) driven part as compared to the latter which is more concerned with environmentally friendly profit driven entrepreneurial activities.

The primary objective of sustainable entrepreneurship is to identify environmentally friendly opportunities by using sustainable and recyclable resources to gain a competitive advantage in the market (Dean, & McMullen, 2007). However, the lack of academic and practical knowledge regarding sustainable entrepreneurship practices and adequate government legislation including the high cost of sustainable products and services (e.g., alternative energy) limits entrepreneurs from making it part of their business practices (Dean & McMullen, 2007).

The various entrepreneurial perspectives mentioned above are based on the characteristics and actions of the entrepreneurs including their ability to use their business for the betterment of their environment. However, the research papers written by Venkataraman and Shane (2000), provide a new outlook on entrepreneurship. They argue that individual characteristics of an entrepreneur are not enough to define the scope of entrepreneurship. One has to dig deeper and discover how entrepreneurs identify, evaluate and utilized entrepreneurial opportunities. They proposed that prior knowledge of the field and the cognition ability of the individual to make effective decisions at the right place and time are the defining ingredients of an entrepreneur (Venkataraman & Shane, 2000).

The perspective presented by Venkataraman and Shane (2000), requires one to pursue a follow-up question which seeks to understand what factors contribute to the identification, evaluation, utilization of entrepreneurial actions at the right place at the right time. In other words, what are those individual and socio-economic factors that allow them to identify, evaluate and utilize entrepreneurial opportunities effectively.

The answer to this question may lie in the effectuation theory presented by Sarasvathy (2016,2001), as she states that understanding individual or Effectuator's (Here the term effectuator means an entrepreneur who use resources at h/her disposal as a mean to generate a desire effect or business action) characteristics and actions are not enough to explain entrepreneurial actions. One must dig deeper and explore questions such as who is the entrepreneur or effectuator (identity), what they know (personal and professional experiences) and whom they know (social network) to explain entrepreneurial actions.

Sarasvathy (2016; 2001), argue that traditional economic and management theories assumed that markets, firms/organizations are created via the causation approach. This perspective argues that management decisions are based on predictive logic and systematically use various

means to achieve an effect or outcome. For instance, if the goal is to create a new restaurant, the effectuator will conduct market research, identify target segments, develop plans for market penetration, and create brand awareness.

Sarasvathy further argues that causation or rational planning perspective is relevant in a predictable environment. It does not work well in the unpredictable market dynamics that require constant change as in the case of entrepreneurship (Sarasvathy, 2008, 2001; Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005). Whereas effectuation works best if someone wants to understand entrepreneurial action and decision making within the context of an unpredictable and unstable environment or in a situation where market do not exist as yet (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005).

Sarasvathy (2008) differs with the idea that causation is the only way to develop new firms and markets and propose effectuation method not as superior but as an alternative to effective entrepreneurial decision making within small business context. She suggests that entrepreneurs not always follow causation model but also use their available means to devise various effects. In other words, an entrepreneur instead of conducting systematic market research will follow the effectual process by asking his friends and family members to provide their feedback on the business idea or make a business decision based on their (friends and family) experiences. Effectuation here is an individual and network process that allows the entrepreneur to use their previous experiences, social interactions with various market actors and use collected feedback for their advantage.

Academics have discussed effectuation theory in terms of networking and differentiated it from the goal-directed causation networking approach. According to Engel *et al.*, (2017), the main objective of goal-directed networking is to have clear and specific objectives, and it is the predetermined business goals, which define entrepreneurial networking strategy. However, effectuator's networking approach stresses new, unordered and flexible form of networking

which determines entrepreneurial business goals. In this context, entrepreneurs initiate networking process with their close friends and family members and use their recommendations and references for further network extension. Here, the entrepreneurs lack any specific goals that they want to achieve through networks. Instead, they use these networks to get to know the market and redefine their business goals in accordance with networking outcomes.

Also, causation networking is encouraged by self-interest (e.g., what is in there for me) and making sure that one reaches his goals as intended (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005). However, effectuator's networking depends on both self-interest and intelligent altruism since they believe that if they help others in the network then one day someone might come to their rescue (Burns *et al.*, 2015; Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005; Saxton *et al.*, 2016).

At the same time causation networking advice one to identify and meet the right people at the right time, but effectuator's networking approach suggest keeping one's network as open as possible since one never know who might come to help one at any time and place (Harmeling & Sarasvathy, 2013). The same holds true for social ties selection within networks since Effectuator network by asking people what resources they can pre-commit as compare to their future expected value (Dew, 2009). During the networking stage, causation networking approach focuses on securing resources to advance fixed business objectives (Engel *et al.*, 2017). While Effectuator's networking approach waits for serendipitous (accidental) outcomes involving ideas and resources of network ties, which may result in the modification of their prior business objectives (Austin *et al.*, 2012; Perry *et al.*, 2011; Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005).

In addition, one can also observe the role of effectuator's mindset within the context of marketing. According to Read *et al.* (2009), expert entrepreneurs (Effectuators) are less prone to conduct market research (effectuation approach) as compared to the business managers

(Causation Approach). These effectuators are sceptical about market data especially within the context of an uncertain business environment. Whereas individuals who are lower in entrepreneurial expertise are more likely to conduct predicted market research and consider it as a given and credible source of market data. In the same line, effectuators will be using their own personal and professional experiences or in other words analogical reasoning to base their marketing decisions.

In addition, effectuators are more likely to pay attention to the affordability of the marketing strategy than individuals with less entrepreneurial experiences are. They have a holistic approach to business, are more interested in the long terms success of their business strategy and involved in the creation of as many markets as possible to gain a competitive edge as compared to the business managers in the large organizations.

Moreover, the emergence of social media as a networking and marketing platform has provided further opportunities to these effectuators. As stated by Fischer and Reuber (2011), social media sites such as Twitter can initiate effectual cognition among entrepreneurs at any time through ongoing social interactions. They conducted a qualitative study on 17 entrepreneurs who use Twitter for networking and marketing purposes and posit that entrepreneurs do not assess the means available to them at the initial stage, instead use available means in their networks to determine various effects. Twitter allows them to gain access and build new networks and garner marketing insights by interacting with likeminded people and allow them to continuously assess and reassess available means and efforts through mutual commitment and collaboration. However, excessive use of social media networks may result in *ineffectual churn* (network saturation) and limit the ability of the entrepreneur to take advantage of social media networks.

Fischer and Reuber (2011), further proposed that community orientation and community norms are two emerging constructs that can influence social interactions on social media positively and leads entrepreneurs to advance through the effectual process. For instance, an effectuator's ability to expand contacts and increase social engagement on social media provides them with further networking and marketing opportunities. In the same way, violating community norms such as the blatant promotion of one's product and too much self-promotion may lead to diminishing network engagement and restricts effectuator's advancement through an effectuation process.

The importance given to community orientation and norms and its positive and negative impact on entrepreneurial business actions prompts one to explore this research area. However, the researcher argues that before the exploration of community orientation and norms one has to understand effectuator's personal orientation (belief system and values) and its impact on their business actions. Since these individual belief system and values have the potential to influence community orientation and norms (Smith *et al.*, 2017).

The question of who is the entrepreneur as stated in the previous paragraphs reflects their identity, which is a set of given means available and are, used to give way for various potential effects (Nielsen & Lassen, 2012). Entrepreneurial identity within effectuation theory is perceived as a given pre-condition, which has the potential to result in the initiation of an effectuator's entrepreneurial process. Thus in effectuation entrepreneurial process, identity is considered relatively stable and can influence one's organizational preferences and decision making in an ambiguous and uncertain situation (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005). Hence, Sarasvathy (2008), argues that at the very start of entrepreneurial process effectuator possess a clear and coherent perception of the self, which then influences their business actions.

They further point out that the interaction of effectuator with other market agents such customers, suppliers, competitors, and market context may result in new business practices and changes in effectuator's identity (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005). However, effectuation theory does not explicitly discuss the changing nature of effectuator's identity and how multiple meanings are emerging from such interactions and relates to effectuator's identify process (Nielsen & Lassen 2012).

Nielsen and Lassen (2012), in their study, attempted to close the upper mentioned gap. They proposed that entrepreneurial effectuation process along with market context pave the way for identity work and affect how effectuators approach new market agents, identify potential opportunities and generate resources. They researched student entrepreneurs in a university environment and argued that the family upbringing and educational institution play a vital role in the shaping and reshaping of effectuator's identity. Unlike Sarasvathy (2001), they consider entrepreneurial identity in constant flux and always changing due to the interaction of the effectuator with their environment.

As stated by Fauchart and Gruber (2011) three forms of entrepreneurial identities influence entrepreneurial action (Darwinian, Communitarian and missionary). They further add that Darwinian refers to the identity of the '*classic entrepreneur*' whose main objective is to establish a business and do whatever they can to make it a success. The frame of reference for this particular Darwinian are the competing firms and other like-minded people. For them, their success is more important than the market they serve or any greater social cause. Thus, they are more likely to shift to a new market venture if given better profit margins.

The second identity is Communitarian entrepreneurial identity, and it is composed of those individuals who develop the business based on a particular motivation, hobby or interest, and their main goals are to serve the needs of their likeminded people or community. They want to

create a business that allows them to share their intimate community knowledge and enable them to serve that particular community from the inside. For Communitarian entrepreneurs it does not make any sense to change their target market (community); therefore, they strive to come up with innovative ways to identify and satisfy their community needs through their products and services.

The third and last form of identity is missionary that motivates the entrepreneur to identify a business to advance and support a greater cause responsibly. One of the examples of this form of identity is social and environmental entrepreneurship.

Alsos et al. (2016), further supports the influence of entrepreneurial social identity (as mentioned above) on business actions within the context of both effectuation and causality. They argue that entrepreneurs who identify themselves as Darwinians take part in casual behaviour as compare to Communitarians who engage in effectual behaviour. Nevertheless, Darwinians and missionary may also follow the casual logic. The reason behind it is that both Darwinians and missionaries start their business with a predetermined goal as the former aims to maximize profits and remain competitive in the market. While the latter wants to use the business to attain a specific grater cause and success is attained by achieving this specific goal.

This particular goal orientation forces the missionary entrepreneurs to move towards predictive behaviour and pay more attention to their competition and expected returns even though their main aim is not monetary. Hence, in both of these cases, their main objective is already set, but the means to attain that particular goal can vary. Therefore, regardless of differences in motivation including the basis for a frame of reference and evaluation, the missionary and Darwinian identities are both goal-oriented and pursue similar ways by focusing on fixed goals and how to get there (strategy).

On the other hand, the main objective of the Communitarian entrepreneurs is to serve their likeminded people or community. Therefore, they will start by identifying and satisfying the needs of their community. They focus on the processes rather than any specific consequence that particular process might lead to (effectuation) (Sarasvathy & Dew 200). However, Alsos *et al.* (2016), argue that communitarian do rely on effectuation but at the same time, they also depend upon casual behaviour which might be the result of institutionalize way to initiate a business by systematically identifying any effectuator's identity that would allow them to adopt a particular casual behaviour. Therefore, one can argue that although Communitarian entrepreneurs identify their business based on their specific interest or goals instead of future goals, they could also adopt a causal way of conducting their business on top of effectual behaviours.

However, these studies only discuss the question of who is the entrepreneur (identity) within the context of the educational institution, family upbringing and social identity (Darwinian, communitarian and missionary). There is a lack of research on the actual effectuator's belief system and values and its impact on business actions.

Au *et al.*, (2017), has discussed the notion of Chinese belief system of "*negotiable fate*" (p.3) and its influence on entrepreneurial orientation and firm financial performance. They contend that belief in leaving everything on fate allow the Chinese entrepreneurs to develop a set of entrepreneurial orientation that positively affects a firm's innovation and financial success. They also argued that the effects of these belief systems are stronger in a dynamic and unpredictable environment and results in entrepreneurs giving more importance to it when making business decisions. This study reiterates the importance of individual belief system on entrepreneurial orientation and firm's financial performance but does not consider other firm related aspects in the form of their communication activities to identify and engage consumers.

Furthermore, other factors such as the effectuator's culture and religion may influence their business actions. The reason behind is that culture and religion provide a general framework for human behaviour and growing number of academics are considering culture in terms of having an impact on entrepreneurial decisions (Lehmann & Seitz, 2017). Therefore, in the next section, the researcher will discuss the relationship between culture and religion on entrepreneurship.

3.3 Influence of Culture and Religion on Entrepreneurship

The research on Entrepreneurship is debated from various perspectives which include political (Schneider and Teske, 1992), institutional (Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum, 2009), psychological (Begley and Boyd, 1987), social (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) and economics (Casson, 2003). However, there is little research data available on the influence of culture and religion on entrepreneurship (Rattan *et al.*, 2017b; Dana, 2010).

If one examines the research, within the context of entrepreneurship in the last 40 years one can identify a crucial insight: instead of remaining, national phenomenon entrepreneurship is culturally specific, regional and embedded in local communities and their institutions (Audretsch & Lehmann, 2016; Obschonka *et al.*, 2015). It is not solely based on individual characteristics of entrepreneurs but also depends upon their local environment (culture and religion) which form entrepreneurial traits at the first place. (Audretsch & Lehmann, 2016).

At present, a large body of research has appeared which is exploring the crucial role of culture in terms of influencing creativity and entrepreneurship (Lehmann & Seitz, 2017). If one examines history one would find out that countries and regions which became economic powerhouses tend to follow the cultural values of individualism, creative thinking, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial behaviour (Acemoglu & Robinson & 2012; Hofstede, 1993). The example

may include *London, San Francisco, Stockholm, Tel Aviv, Dublin, and Berlin*. These cities not only known in terms of following the values mentioned above but because of the entrepreneurial drive they portrayed entrepreneurship as the popular trend and part of a sophisticated lifestyle (Lehmann & Seitz, 2017).

As stated before, what motivates creativity and entrepreneurship has been extensively studied by academics. Some approach this topic from an institutional and technological perspective (Porter, 1998, 2000). Few have examined it from human capital and social capital perspectives (Audretsch and Lehmann, 2016). Recently academics are shifting their attention to cultural driven factors and their influence on regional and local innovation and entrepreneurship (Florida, 2014; Torjman & Worren, 2010).

It is being argued that entrepreneurial orientation, which is the ability and willingness of an individual to consider entrepreneurial activities is mainly institutionalized by their cultural milieu. (Audretsch, 2015; Obschonka *et al*, 2015; Fritsch & Wyrwich, 2012; Hofstede, 1993). The importance of culture can be understood by the idea that it can influence how individuals perceive their environment, their decision making, e.g., choices how they interact with each other (Aoyama, 2009; Altinay, 2008).

The debate on the influence of culture on entrepreneurship was first initiated by Weber (2013), in his famous book the "*Spirit of the capitalism*" (Lehmann & Seitz, 2016). He argued that Protestantism had encouraged a culture of rationality, entrepreneurship, achievement motivation, individualism and self-reliance (Weber, 2002). He stated that this form of cultural ethic was essential for the emergence of modern day capitalism. However, Weber believed that this form of cultural ethos was absent in other religious traditions. For instance, he argued that Protestant work ethic could not be formed into *Hindu* and *Islamic* religions due to their caste

system, fate, rebirth, and excessive ritualism, reliance on magic and warrior ethic (Lehmann & Seitz, 2016).

McClelland (1965), build on the work of Weber by analysing the influence of culture on twenty-two countries. His research concluded that the economic growth of these countries is the direct result of “*culture of the individuality and the need for achievement*” (Lehmann & Seitz, 2016. p.10). McClelland findings are in accordance with the studies of Morris *et al.*,(1994) and Spence (1985) who reveal that high rate of entrepreneurship in the United States is due to their cultural values such as individualism, materialism, achievement, freedom, and independence.

Recent studies have also revealed that the culture of entrepreneurship is embedded in the region or to be more specific local level such as city and district (Bosch *et al.*, 2009; Feldman and Audretsch, 1999). Florida (2014), in her research, emphasized the role of tolerance and individualism as one of the important reasons for the rise of entrepreneurship. Research conducted by Davidson and Wiklund (1997), suggest that acceptance of capitalism, valuation of money, autonomy, need for achievement, change orientation, and a competitive culture provide variations in different regional business in Sweden.

At a local level, Basu and Altinay (2002) had conducted empirical research on the influence of culture on the entrepreneurial activities of ethnic entrepreneurs in London. They interviewed 163 entrepreneurs' majority of them were Muslims. Their findings suggest that culture does influence entrepreneurial activities in the form of family heritage and traditions. For instance, the role of the family is very important in terms of selection and management of the entrepreneurial business. The family provides entrepreneurs with human and financial resources including reliable business advice through its extended network (ethnic and religious community).

Salaff *et al.* (2006), identified a similar trend among entrepreneurs in Hong Kong who consider family as a basic unit of economic production and market competition. In her study of twenty-eight middle and working-class Hong Kong families, she found that family of an entrepreneur supports them in terms of taking a risk and pushes them to become an entrepreneur.

The family business in Hong Kong is a form of an ethos that is not limited to the affluent families, but it permeates the entire society. Salaff *et al.* (2006), explain that a typical business family in her study revolves around an autocratic father figure who is “*responsible for the uncommon adaptability and maneuverability of Hong Kong enterprises*” (p.25). Every member of the family is supposed to contribute financially to the family enterprise. In return, the family offers them incentives that include emotional and financial support.

Wong (1985) attempted to find the connection between the core values of the Hong Kong's newly burgeoning entrepreneurial familism and traditional Chinese family. He states that the adherence to the value of independence among Hong Kong Chinese to be their own boss, to become an entrepreneur may have come from their society that believed that all the brothers within the family are interdependent and have a right to attain family estate.

As stated in the academic literature, culture is not the only institutional factor that influences entrepreneurship. Due to the rising interest in the relationship between institutional factors and entrepreneurship, academics have started to pay more attention to the role played by religion on entrepreneurial actions (Dougherty *et al.*, 2013). The studies that concerned themselves with religion and entrepreneurship mainly used small non-probability sampling which resulted in conflicting findings (Dougherty *et al.*, 2013). For instance, Bellu and Fiume (2004) conducted a study by using a sample of 44 entrepreneurs from Brooklyn, United States. Their finding indicated that religiosity among these entrepreneurs influenced them in terms of having a desire for personal and professional achievement and increased their ability to become innovative in

their fields. Correspondingly, religious participation by the Japanese-Americans due to their family influence, stimulate them to become self-employed (Woodrum, 1985).

Audretsch *et al.* (2007) conducted a study on the impact of Hindu religion including cast system on entrepreneurship in India. They postulate that Hindu religion and its caste system play a significant role in the decisions of the individual to become entrepreneurs. They identify that Hindus who are considered to be from a lower class background tend to inhibit entrepreneurship due to the limitation on freedom of occupational choices due to the prevailing caste system. Although, the study identified that *Jainism, Islam,* and Christianity provide a more conducive environment for entrepreneurship in South Asia as compared to Hinduism. Their findings also urged scholars to research the impact of religion on entrepreneurship if the location was changed from South Asia to Europe and the United Kingdom (UK). Previous study (without naming any religion) has proposed that some South Asian immigrants acquire entrepreneurial status once they move away from their country of origin (Audretsch *et al.*, 2007).

The finding mentioned above gives one an indicator of the impact of religion on entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, there is some academic research conducted which refute the effect of religion over entrepreneurship. For instance, the study directed by Dodd and Seaman (1998) held that entrepreneurs in the UK have similar religious beliefs as other wage or salary workers and religion has little role to play in terms of the former being entrepreneurial. The research conducted by (Griebel, 2010) complicated the matter even further by postulating that the 20 entrepreneurs they interviewed in Colorado, United States were never regularly participating in Church activities, but they all proclaimed that they have religiously inspired values that influence their business activities.

A study led by Dougherty *et al.*, (2013) gives one an account of a religious profile of an American entrepreneur. They contend that there is no difference between the religious entrepreneurs and anyone else who considers oneself religious. They further suggest that American entrepreneurs take religion as more private as compared to the rest of the population. They think of God as more personal and responsive as compared to the public.

Therefore, in order to understand these conflicting findings, one has to give more attention to the different religions in terms of their content, salient and its social components (Dodd & Gotsis, 2007). Since certain religions promote values which encourage entrepreneurship among its followers (Dana, 2007). For example, the values promoted by Amish religion (self-sufficiency, hard work, and asceticism) promote self-employment amongst its followers (Dana, 2007).

Another context in which one can notice the role of religion over entrepreneurship is in the religious congregations. The use of religious congregation as a social capital among entrepreneurs is not new but is prevalent in various societies around the globe. Entrepreneurs, both mainstream and ethnic, use their religious congregation as a major platform to identify business opportunities, develop social contacts and receive both financial and human resources (Dana, 2009).

In addition, this form of religious interaction helps individuals develop shared values that may also include those that are conducive towards entrepreneurship. Dougherty *et al.*, (2013) argued that majority of the American entrepreneurs "*worship in the pro-business congregation*" (p. 407), since these congregations are regarded as a source of social capital in the United States (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

Dodd and Gotsis (2007) reconfirm the positive role of religious networks over entrepreneurial actions by arguing that "*social desirability of entrepreneurship is enhanced*

when specific institutions surrounding the entrepreneur provide positive legitimation for entrepreneurship in general, and specific forms of entrepreneurship in particular" (P.100).

Although there is not much academic published work related to the role of the congregation over entrepreneurship, there is some ethnographic evidence that suggests that these forms of congregation play an important role in entrepreneurship (Dougherty *et al.*, 2013).

In addition, religion is considered a crucial part of a culture and plays a vital role in the business activities of entrepreneurs (Modood & Metcalf, 2016). There are various academics such as Adam Smith and Weber who argued that religion has a fundamental role to play in terms of shaping economics (Anderson, 1988).

There are studies, which indicate a relationship between religion and entrepreneurship (McCleary & Barro, 2006; Guisa *et al.*, 2006). To understand the impact of religion on human behaviour is not an easy task since one can determine the religious identity of an individual but it would be difficult to measure how deeply they internalize their religious, ethical principles (Nunziata and Rocco, 2016). Hence, religious identity is considered a poor reference point in terms of judging the religiosity level among people. For example, only 20% of western European believes in life after death, but the statistics suggest that 70% of western Europeans are self-declared Christians (International Social Survey Programme Religion II data, 1998; cited in Nunziata and Rocco, 2016).

Nunziata and Rocco (2016), conducted a study comparing Protestant and Catholic minorities in Switzerland in terms of how their religious dominations affect their ability to become entrepreneurs using Swiss census data. Since the measurement of religious adhesion is not an easy task, the researchers came up with a novel approach. Their research design took advantage of the fact that religious minorities tend to adhere to their religion more as compare to the majorities religion (Nunziata & Rocco, 2014).

The reason behind it is that minorities consider their religion as an important part of their identity in the immigrant country. Therefore, they consider it their utmost responsibility to protect and preserve it by rigorously following the principles outlined in it. They believe that their community is always in a pressure to become part of the dominant culture or religion. Hence, one can only resist this pressure by proactively internalizing their religion and making it part of their daily lifestyle (Nunziata & Rocco, 2014).

Their findings suggest that Protestants compare to Catholic minority are more entrepreneurial (1.5 and 3.2% points) and that is because of their religion. Nunziata and Rocco (2016), believed that adherence to one's religion is inversely proportional to the size of one's religious community. If the religious group is small, they will tend to internalize their religion more as compared to someone with a larger group.

Modood and Metcalf (2016) conducted a study on British Asian entrepreneurs. Their findings indicate that British Pakistani entrepreneurs take more risk and are open to new ideas as compare to British Indians and British African entrepreneurs due to their religious belief that God is going to protect their interest. However, excessive dependence on religious beliefs and their unbalanced attempt to create an effective business plan including over-optimistic risk-taking may lead to a low rate of entrepreneurial success.

The role of religion becomes very important when dealing with ethnic communities since their religion is not a bundle of mere rituals that they have to obey. They consider it as a major part of their identity and whose defense is as important as the preservation of their own lives (Jamal, 2015). Existing academic research has indicated that ethnic entrepreneurs consider religion as a sacred source to advance their business interest and are more likely to use religious guidance in their daily lives in general and business in particular since religion. Therefore, in the next

section, the researcher will discuss various perspectives of ethnic entrepreneurship including its relationship with religion.

3.4 Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Prior to the discussion of ethnic entrepreneurship, one first has to understand the meaning of ethnicity. According to Yinger (1994), *“an ethnic group is ‘a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients’”* (p.3).

The definition of ethnic identity stated above is a traditional one that perceived it as the collective sum of shared origins, values, religion, morals and etiquette (Webster, 1994). However, the emergence of globalization due to the transformation in communicational technologies in the past three decades and its impact on immigration has changed the way ethnic identity is being perceived and negotiated (Castells, 2011). The growth of consumerism and individualism in the marketplace has provided people unlimited choices which are not limited to their economic consumption but gives them the opportunity to select their identity based on their interests (Giddens, 1991, Bauman, 2000).

Therefore, one can perceive identity, not something one born with but also as a process of self-identification through which people define themselves and others into a particular group by using specific labels (Barth, 1969; Cuellar *et al.*, 1997; Rossiter & Chan, 1998; Tajfel, 1981). For instance, an individual can be born in an ethnic or religious group but shed his/her identity by adapting other identities as per his/her convenience. The example would be a person born into a British Pakistani Muslim family but later in life sheds off his/her ethnic and religious identity and perceives oneself as British Asian Gay (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012).

They argue that the process of self-identification is not only depended upon the personal choice of an individual. It is also based on their experience and the inability of their discarded identities to enable them to live the desired lifestyle and their perception of themselves in relation with their environment (2012).

An important aspect of self-identification is the extent one attaches' emotional importance and value to the membership of a particular group (Tajfel, 1981). In other words, the ethnic identity of a person also depends upon the extent they identify with the particular group. Therefore, an individual may strongly identify and committed with one set of sub-identity (e.g., environmentalist or feminist) but not attach oneself with another aspect of their other sub-identities (religious, liberal, being father, mother and more.).

In this context, one can say that ethnic identity of individuals are not uniform but multiple and vary from group to group since they experience mixed emotions at a given time (Otnes *et al.*, 1997). A person may identify oneself differently when they are in their ethnic group as compared to when they are with the people of the mainstream population. An example would be a British Muslim female wearing a Hijab at the Mosque and taking it off when going out shopping with her Caucasian friends (see, for example, Oswald, 1999; Jamal and Chapman, 2000). Hence, Oswald (1999) argued that '*in consumer culture, ethnic identity can be bought, sold and worn like a loose garment*' (p. 304).

Stamen and Deshpande (1989), placed a similar argument, that the social situation of an individual and his/her perception about it affects their ethnic identity. They state that ethnic individuals in the host country have multiple identities, which make it easier for them to survive in that society by allowing them to act differently in different situations based on their self-interest (Aaker, 1999; Markus & Kunda, 1986). On this basis, Donthu and Cherian (1994),

gave an example of the Hispanic population in the United States by arguing that they tend to act like mainstream population throughout the year except for their ethnic festivals and when visiting their ethnic restaurants.

Castells (2011), argued that globalization and the transformation in communicational technologies have changed the notion of fixed identity and allow people to attain multiple and flexible identities in accordance with their unique social context. Nowadays, it would be difficult for marketers and sociologists to classify people in terms of any one ethnic group since individuals have more freedom to choose different notions of identity markers (Bauman, 2013, Castells, 2011). The freedom to choose from various identities allows people from various ethnicities to experiment and integrate their ancestral identity with values of the host environment by following their interest (Jamal, 2003). One of the prime examples of this form of identity formation can be observed in the emerging literature on ethnic entrepreneurship.

Ethnic entrepreneurship is one of the fastest growing business fields in the United Kingdom (Gbadamosi, 2015). The reason behind this is due to the rising level of education among ethnic minorities (Owen *et al.*, 2000) and their ability to identify niche markets for creative business opportunities (Dhaliwal, 2004). Jamal (2005), argues that the majority of the ethnic entrepreneurs identify their communities as the primary target market. These ethnic entrepreneurs understand their ethnic market better than traditional organizations due to similar culture and religion can identify market gaps much early in comparison to mainstream organizations (Dhaliwal, 2004; Chaudhry & Crick, 2008).

In addition, the growing population of ethnic groups in the UK, along with the rise in their living standard are some of the motives which persuade entrepreneurs to initiate ethnic entrepreneurial activities (Volery, 2007). It has also been stated that the rise of ethnic entrepreneurship has a positive effect on the stagnant British economy since it continues to

provide more job opportunities to the people and in turn stimulate national productivity (Teixeira, 2001).

As stated by Waldinger *et al.*, "*ethnic entrepreneurship is a set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing a common national background or migration experiences* (Waldinger *et al.*, 1990, p. 33). This definition gives more attention to ethnicity rather than entrepreneurship and does not take into account entrepreneurs catering to members other than their community. However, it does give a reader a sense of understanding about ethnic entrepreneurship and its incorporation of ethnic entrepreneur and their ethnic group as an integral part of the entire entrepreneurial process.

According to Zhou (2004), the literature of ethnic entrepreneurship has identified and discussed various perceptive on ethnic Entrepreneurship in the form of the enclave, cultural and middlemen theories. He states that the middlemen entrepreneurs are those who act as traders between the producer and the consumer. These entrepreneurs are not restricted to their ethnicity but encompass other ethnic groups and mainstream population and are known for their ability to save money and lend it to others for a profit (2004). At the same time, they identify and establish a business in poor neighborhoods or places ignored by mainstream businesses in order to later sell it for a profit (Bonacich, 1973).

Zhou (2004) argued that these entrepreneurs never restricted themselves to underprivileged regions and established their footing in affluent urban neighborhoods. Although, they have professional interaction with the mainstream population they have limited ties with the latter on a personal level (2004).

On the other hand, he argued that enclave entrepreneurs are restricted by location, ethnicity and its social structures. Their product offering mainly includes ethnic products and services for their ethnic community. They have almost no interaction with the general population since all the aspects of their business functions revolve around their ethnic group. However, with

time they do tend to expand their business and cater to other ethnic communities and the general population. (Zhou, 2004).

Recent academic research studies argue that ethnic groups in the UK are more entrepreneurial as compared to the mainstream population (Bates, 2006). Bates further argued that the reasons behind their entrepreneurial attitudes are many and depends upon their unique individual situation and life experiences (2006).

Portes and Böröcz (1989), describe this attitude in terms of push and pull factor. They argue that (and as suggested by disadvantage theory) some ethnic entrepreneurs are pushed into self-employment as they have no other way to earn a living due to language barriers, less interaction with the mainstream population, ethnic discrimination or low level of education. While some immigrants are pulled into entrepreneurial activities since they are integrated into the immigrated society, possess a high level of education, financial independence and language skills to compete successfully in the market.

Moreover, the cultural theory suggested that their physical environment influences ethnic entrepreneurs and cultural values (hard work, family, persistence, respect, and more), including their family and community to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Volery, 2007, Rafiq, 1992). The family provided financial flexibility; motivation and low-cost labour and the community allowed entrepreneurs to expand their business prospects through its social network which is based on trust and solidarity within the ethnic group, thus creating market competitiveness (Ratten *et al.*, 2017a).

As stated by Gbadamosi (2015), religion plays a very role in the life of ethnic entrepreneurs as it provides them a social and economic resource. He argued that the belief in God is considered as a survival strategy among ethnic entrepreneurs who embark into an uncharted territory of entrepreneurship by believing that God is on their side. This form of belief gives them the

ability to withstand the daily pressure of their businesses and take risks which are paramount in entrepreneurial endeavors (2015).

Moreover, the role of religious institutions in terms of providing entrepreneurial training and relevant support has made them quite influential among ethnic entrepreneurs (Gbadamosi, 2015). The evolution of religious institution from restoring morality among followers to enabling them to become effective market agents has allowed the members to forge new relationships based on one “*spiritual family in the name of faith, one baptism, one Lord and one Spirit*” for mutual benefit (Howard, 1987, cited in Gbadamosi, 2015 p. 7).

At the moment the author has discussed the importance of ethnic entrepreneurship including the major theoretical perspectives it has to offer. The theories mentioned above describe four major theoretical paradigms regarding ethnic entrepreneurs (i.e., middleman, cultural theory and enclave economy theory) and how they are pushed and pulled into entrepreneurial endeavours. It also highlights factors such as religion and culture that can have a direct impact on the way ethnic entrepreneurs engage in business transactions. However, since the main research question related to this study is about the influence of *Islamic belief* on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. Therefore, the next section will explore the emerging phenomena of *Islamic* entrepreneurship and whether it can influence the entrepreneurial actions of its followers.

3.5 Islamic Entrepreneurship

As stated previously, the religious teachings of *Islam* are not limited to the matters related to inner life or life after death, but it also includes guidance on the social life of the follower in this world. The basic tenet of *Islam* requires the follower to believe in one God, recognize the

potential God has confided in him/her, and use it for the personal and societal benefit (Ghazali, 2010).

The *Quran*, which is considered a direct word of God for Muslims, has various passages which explain the importance of work in the life of the believers. *Quran* states that “*And when the prayer is ended, then disperse in the land and seek of Allah’s favour, and remember Allah much, that you may succeed.*” (*Quran* 62:10 cited from Gümüşay, 2014). On another occasion, the *Quran* says ‘*He it is who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk in the paths of it and eat of His provision. So to Him will be the resurrection.*’ (*Quran* 67:15 cited from Gümüşay, 2014).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who introduced *Islam* to the world, had on several occasions mentioned the importance of work and entrepreneurship to Muslims. For example, once he said that “*work for your worldly life as if you were going to live forever, but work for the life to come as if you were going to die tomorrow*” (*Sahih Muslim*, translated by Siddiqi, 1980). On another occasion when asked what kind of earning is best, he replied: “*A man’s work with his hands and every (lawful) business transaction*” (*AlTirmidhi*, cited from Gümüşay, 2014). Muhammad (PBUH) had urged for his followers to work and forbade them to beg or stay idle (Gümüşay, 2014).

Islam proactively encourages the culture of entrepreneurship, which promotes achievement and private enterprise through initiative driven mindset in order to achieve *Falah* (felicity) (Tripp, 2006). However, the social welfare component inculcated in Islamic belief system also forces the public sector to engage in such commercial activities which are inaccessible, unprofitable or unwelcome by the private sector due to limited returns (Tripp, 2006).

Elfakkhani and Ahmed (2013), described the behaviour of a Muslim entrepreneur by stating that the supreme principle of justice must guide his/her behaviour under any circumstances

(*Qur'an* 4:135, 5:9, 7:29), cooperation (*Qur'an* 5:30), magnanimity (*Qur'an* 16:90), virtuous and personal disliking of wrongful behaviour (*Qur'an* 3:104, 3:114, 7:157, 9:71, 9:112, 22:41, 31:17). Also, the commercial initiative of an entrepreneur must be based on trustworthiness, honesty and the attitude of un-aggressiveness towards others (Customers and suppliers).

The authors argue that *Islam* considers an entrepreneur is someone who believes in God and seeks his guidance in any situation. *Islam* also forbade greed since it hinders the moral development of an entrepreneur and requires them to show generosity, kindness, good actions, and rational discernibility in their daily business activities. The pursuit of money for the sake of money is considered as a way which leads Muslims towards the appropriation of unethical values such as lying, false testimony, and fabrication of truth and assiduous search of knowledge. The development of such immoral values makes the person forget about the social welfare of society and amass oneself in the sole pursuit of personal satisfaction.

Islamic entrepreneurship is in contrast with mainstream entrepreneurship, which is considered both western and capitalistic in nature. As stated by Elfakhani and Ahmed (2013), western entrepreneurship is mainly about value maximization at the personal level. While Islamic entrepreneurship is about the development of business enterprises whose sole purpose is not limited to wealth creation alone but it is also about benefiting the entire society in accordance with Islamic principles.

There might be some critics who may find no difference between social entrepreneurship and Islamic entrepreneurship, which as the claim is the desire to achieve the same result which is the benefit of the entire community. However, Gümüşay (2014) argued that the difference between Islamic and other socio-economic perspective mentioned above is that the former has a "*specific narrative and practices or in other words a pre-defined scripture source and a unique metaphysical objective*" (p.5). Therefore, he proposed a comprehensive approach

towards entrepreneurship research which incorporates religion might enrich academic literature on entrepreneurship. In addition, the growing influence of religion on individual action around the globe make it necessary for academics to look in this unique relationship and debate its implications upon the future discourse of the market (Habermas, 2001).

At present, several academics use the term Islamic entrepreneurship to distinguish the later from a capitalistic form of entrepreneurship. However, what they do not realise is that Islam does not provide a specific theory on entrepreneurship. Instead, it provides a theoretical framework or a perspective on entrepreneurship (Gümüşay, 2014). Gümüşay (2014), argues that Islamic entrepreneurship can only be explained well if one first understands the meaning of Islam. In *Saheh Bukhari*, Angel Gabriel asked *Allah* about who is the true Muslim (individual who consider Islam as his/her religion). *Allah* responded by saying that there are three stages which a person has to attain in order to become a perfect Muslim known as *Islam*, *Iman*, and *Ihsan*. Islam means to give a testimony that there is no God but *Allah*, and Muhammad is the prophet of *Allah*. It also means as a Muslim one has to offer prayers five times a day, fast in Ramadan, pay *Zakat* and make a pilgrimage to *Makkah* at least once in a lifetime (Gümüşay, 2014).

The next pillar of Islam is *Iman* which means to believe in the existence of *Allah*, his books, angels, last day and the divine destiny. *Ihsan* means to worship *Allah* as if he/she sees you and you are seeing him/her. It means that *Allah* is watching the actions of the people which then make them more accountable for their actions in order to please *Allah*.

Therefore, a Muslim entrepreneur is someone who believes in one God and considers work as his/her religious duty to seek God's bounty. They take risks while keeping in mind that God is there to protect them and resolve any problematic situation. However, they also believe that God will be on their side only if they are following the Islamic principles which advocate justice

and ethics in business activities. The ignorance of justice, ethics, social welfare, and morality will lead to chaos and result in the punishment by God and business failure.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the importance of entrepreneurship, examine, and compared various perspectives that resulted in the emergence of academic literature on this subject. The chapter provides an overview of effectuation as a theoretical underpinning for this research. The effectuation theory argues that who is the Entrepreneurs (effectuator's belief system) has the potential to influence business actions. It also suggests that effectuator's orientation (who I am?) and actions are not fixed and always changing in accordance with the local environment which is not limited to consumers, suppliers, and personal and professional networks. It also includes social institutions in the form of education, family institutions, and local environment. However, effectuation theory briefly discusses who is the entrepreneur within the context of identity and do not consider the actual effectuator's beliefs and values and how it influences entrepreneurial actions. In the same line, effectuation theory has briefly discussed the role of social institutions (family and education institutions, business networks) but it has paid less attention to how other social institutions in the form of religion and local cultural dynamics influence effectuators business actions and more specifically their communication activities.

Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher has also examined current academic literature review on the influence of culture and religion on entrepreneurship. the literature further discussed how ethnic (culture) and religious (Islam) institutions identify new markets and engaged customers based on similar ethnic and religious experiences.

Some of the key themes identified in academic literature suggest that ethnic entrepreneurs are more likely to incorporate ethnic culture and religion into their personal and business lives. The reason behind it is that minorities consider their ethnicity and religion as an important part of their identity in the immigrant country. They believe it is their ultimate responsibility to protect and preserve their ethnic and religious identity by rigorously following the principles outlined in it. They believe that their community is always in a pressure to become part of the dominant culture and religion. Hence, one can only resist this pressure by proactively internalizing their ethnic culture and religion and making it part of their daily lifestyle including business activities (Nunziata & Rocco, 2014).

Another key issue discussed the notion of ethnicity including its various theoretical perspectives (social enclave theory, middlemen theory), and how ethnic entrepreneurs are pushed and pulled into entrepreneurial activities. It examined the role of culture and religion in the business activities of ethnic entrepreneurs since it allows them to identify potential markets and engage customers and develop a long-lasting relationship based on a similar ethnic culture and religious experiences.

More specifically, the researcher finds that Islam supports such an entrepreneurial culture that leads to individual and societal progress (Adas, 2006). The emerging academic literature on Islam and entrepreneurship suggests that Islam teachings and values not only endorse entrepreneurship and economic development. It strictly urges its followers not to remain ideal but to engage in work in order to please God and attain salvation (Elfakkhani & Ahmed, 2013).

According to the Islam principals, an entrepreneur is someone who believes in one God and seeks his/her bounty on the land by following the values mentioned in *Quran* and *Sunnah* for individual and societal betterment (Adas, 2006). The social aspect of Islamic entrepreneurship cannot be confused with social entrepreneurship. As stated by Gümüşay (2014) Islamic

entrepreneurship has a specific narrative and practices that are devised by the *Quran* and *Sunnah* (teachings of Muhammad). While the literature on social entrepreneurship has been defined and re-defined by various academics. However, Islam does not provide a specific theory on entrepreneurship. It only gives a moral and ethical framework and general principles that make the Muslim entrepreneur understand the perspective of Islam on business (Gümüşay, 2014).

At present, the researcher has discussed various perspectives of entrepreneurship and its relationship with ethnicity in general and Islam in particular. In the next chapter, the researcher will be examining the academic literature review on entrepreneurial marketing and further review the literature within the context of both ethnicity and Islam.

Chapter 4 Literature Review (Marketing)

4.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter will examine the origin of marketing and its relationship with entrepreneurship. The second section will discuss and critically analyse academic literature on ethnic and Islamic marketing. The third section has investigated the emerging phenomena of social media marketing and how mobile technology, content marketing and networking is enabling businesses to identify and engage customers.

Some of the emerging key issues identified in Entrepreneurial marketing section highlighted entrepreneur as a central figure and responsible for overall business activities ranging from product development to marketing. The literature review in this section compared large businesses with entrepreneurial entities and indicated that the latter is more flexible and innovate in its approach as compare to the former due to its small size and less bureaucratic red tape (only one person is looking after every part of business operation). However, the focus on the central figure (entrepreneur/owner) has its implications since it prompts the business to have haphazard marketing style that changes on a regular basis due to changing business circumstances and entrepreneur's experiences as compared to systematic marketing approach.

The role of the entrepreneur as a central figure is also present in academic ethnic marketing literature and indicate their promotional activities as haphazard. The literature further indicate that ethnic entrepreneurs are very flexible in their marketing approach which is customer centric (relationship marketing) and transactional (low cost e.g. sale) in nature but lack market research and continuous innovation to identify and engage customers. However, there is a difference between immigrant and first and second generation of ethnic entrepreneurs. The new

generation of ethnic entrepreneurs due to their education and mainstream cultural understanding are penetrating new consumer markets through innovative digital media practices.

Another key issue discussed in the Ethnic marketing section is the identification of consumer markets based on ethnicity and mainstream population. These ethnic entrepreneurs identify and engage their markets based on their unique ethnicity, religion and mainstream culture. The use of one's religious experiences is a recurring theme in ethnic marketing literature. As more and more ethnic entrepreneurs are taking advantage of emerging consumers classes around the globe who wants to consume products and services in accordance with their religious principles and practices.

Since the aim of this research is about exploring the influence of Islamic beliefs on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs; therefore, in the next section the researcher has discussed Islamic marketing in order to further understand the growing relationship between religion and marketing. One of the key themes that have emerged in this section defined Islamic marketing as the ability to identify and satisfy consumer needs in accordance with Islamic principles of ethnic and morality and social consciousness as stated in Quran.

The data further discussed the growing relationship between Islam and marketing and the growth of Muslim consumer class in the UK and abroad and their willingness to buy products in accordance with their religion and global consumer culture. The literature further highlights that growing numbers of ethnic entrepreneurs realize the potential of this phenomena and using their unique religious and western experiences to identify and engage these new consumer markets in accordance with Islamic principles and global consumer culture. Figure 4.1 provide

a conceptual framework for this chapter and how entrepreneurship literature has been examined within the context of Islam, ethnicity and social media.

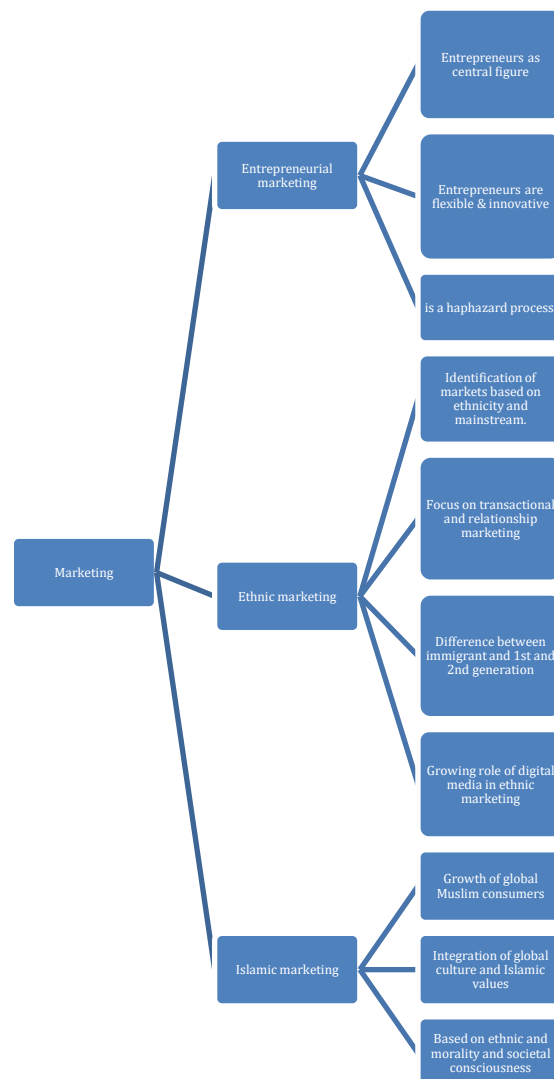


Figure 4.1: Marketing literature framework

4.2 Marketing

The origins of Marketing are considered as old as Human civilization (Jones & Shaw, 2002; Minowa & Witkowski, 2009; Moore & Reid, 2008; Shaw & Jones, 2005). However, since the scope of this chapter is Islamic marketing, therefore, the author will limit the discussion of this topic to the evolution and practice of marketing in the twentieth century.

According to Wilkie and Moore (2006), the definition of marketing has gone from various stages, which depended upon the socio-economic environment of these times. Therefore, in the early part of the 20th-century marketing was considered management centric. In other words, marketing was considered as a tool to communicate information about the goods and services from organization to consumers.

The mid of the twenty century attempted to change this marketing style by incorporating a customer-centric approach to marketing management. Nevertheless, even in those times, the main goal of marketing was to create value for the organization by luring customer through their marketing activities. The objective was to emphasize the exchange (Brand image) value of the product instead of its real value. Hence the product value comes not from their function but from their cultural meaning in the minds of consumers. (Baudrillard, 1998).

The rise of the digital revolution and social media transformed the way marketing is performed by organizations around the globe (Tuten, & Solomon, 2014). The democratization of communication tools took marketing power away from organizations and gave it to consumers (Tuten, & Solomon, 2014). Nowadays, an organization cannot just communicate their offering to the people they have to actively engage consumers from product development to distribution in order to compete successfully. Hence, the new definition of marketing is transformed from management centric to consumer-centric (Tuten, & Solomon, 2014).

American marketing association defines marketing as an “*activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large*” (American marketing association, 2013).

This definition of marketing specifies the consumer-centric attitude of marketing which pay more attention to the needs and desires of the consumer as compared to the values which benefit organizations alone.

The current definitions of marketing pay more attention to the 4P's (Product, Place, Price, and Promotion) (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007). The varied interpretations of marketing create a perception that marketing is all about the manipulation of the 4Ps in order to elicit the desired response from consumer to maximize organizational profits (Brownlie & Saren, 1992; Mittelstaedt *et al.*, 2006). This form of practice led to the failure of the marketers to effectively align them with diversified economies and global connectivity (Sheth & Sisodia, 2006).

While almost all the definitions of marketing urge sellers to satisfy the need of the consumers, in practice marketers are always involved in the process of eliciting a response from the consumer (Brownlie & Saren, 1992). They give more emphasis to the short-term wants and desires of the consumer instead of developing marketing strategies which can provide long-term satisfaction to consumers (Brownlie & Saren, 1992). Hence the objective of marketing has become to serve the long-term interest of the investors, instead of sincerely and passionately solves consumer problems for profit (Holt, 2002).

Holt (2002), argues that consumer does not prefer brands to become too much commercialized. The society desire for a kind of market environment where marketers are sincere to their customers and conduct the practices of social sustainability instead of giving more importance to growth, power, and profit (Varey, 2010).

Moreover, the limited definitions of conventional marketing at a firm level do not take into account the impact of its practices on society at large. For instance, organizations might not recognize the impact of its marketing policies on the environment or the quality of life on earth. The lack of social consciousness in the context of marketing decision results in the total disregard of the social welfare of the society. Therefore, these firms are not able to resolve societal issues which arise due to their marketing efforts at the first place (Fisk, 1981).

4.2.1 Entrepreneurship and Marketing

If entrepreneurship is about identifying and utilizing economic opportunities for ones benefit then marketing has the potential to turn these market prospects into reality by attracting customers (Lam & Harker, 2013). As stated by Gilmore (2013), there are various similarities exist within the discipline of marketing and entrepreneurship and how they complement each other and increase national economic output. For instance, marketing and entrepreneur have the characteristics of market-driven proactivity, opportunistic approach, uncertainty, and risk needed in a successful venture (Gilmore *et al.*, 2013). Both disciplines believe in innovation as a way to maximize the objective they pursue. They have high interaction with the market environment which gives them the flexibility to change their approach in line with the changing market conditions (Miles *et al.*, 1991).

In the past, academics have considered marketing and entrepreneurship as two distinct fields of business studies (Hills *et al.*, 2008). They studied marketing from the perspective of large businesses and regarded it as a systematic process in which an organization markets their products through the 4Ps (Product, Price, Placement, and Promotion) (Hills *et al.*, 2008). They believed that focusing on big business is important than small enterprise since the large enterprises play an important part in the growth of the national economy (Landstrom *et al.*, 2012; Miles & Darroch, 2006; Davis *et al.*, 1985; Druker, 1984).

In the 70's, the changing shift in the market from the big business to small business prompted the academics to study the intradisciplinary approach of marketing and entrepreneurship (Jones & Wadhvani, 2006). They realized the importance of small business and entrepreneurial initiatives in terms of boosting national productivity through market innovations (Stel *et al.*, 2005). They wanted to know how the interaction between the disciplines of entrepreneurship and marketing can help small businesses to grow and play an active role in terms of job creation and stimulating economic growth (Miles & Arnold 1991).

In order to answer these questions, the first step for academics was to describe the relationship between marketing and entrepreneurship. There is an ongoing debate among researchers in terms of conceptualizing the exact definition of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) since the term is interpreted in various ways (Kraus *et al.*, 2010; Morris, 2002). Thus, "*there might be many possible combinations of the conceptualizations of entrepreneurship and marketing, and their Interrelations*" (Kraus *et al.*, 2010, pg. 4).

Some academics defined EM in terms of marketing actions of small businesses to attract consumers (Hill and Wright, 2000; less explicitly Stokes, 2002b) while others considered the size of the firm as irrelevant (Morris *et al.*, 2000; Bäckbrö and Nyström, 2006). There are few who have looked into the qualitative aspects of EM and defined it as innovative (Bäckbrö and Nyström, 2006; Stokes, 2002a) or creative (Morris *et al.*, 2000; Bäckbrö and Nyström, 2006; Stokes, 2002a) way to proactively identify and exploit market opportunities through continuous "*innovation and risk management, resource leveraging and value creation for customers*" (Morris *et al.*, 2000, pg. 5).

Stokes distinguishes traditional marketing from entrepreneurial marketing by arguing that unlike big businesses, marketing for entrepreneurs is a haphazard (unsystematic) process (2000). It is the entrepreneur who acts as a central figure when it comes to making strategic

marketing decisions in his/her organization (Stokes, 2002; Hill & Wright, 2000). These entrepreneurs may not use conventional marketing strategies due to their limited human and financial resources (Aldrich & Auster, 1986) including a small customer base and limited market power (Carson, 1985). Instead, they develop their own style that is based on their personal intuition, education, social networks, specific market conditions and competition (Gilmore & Carson, 2007; Read *et al.*, 2009, Hill & Wright, 2000).

The size of entrepreneurial organizations carries both positive and negative influences on their marketing approach. For example, being small allowed these companies to become innovative and flexible in their marketing approach and anticipate market demands in order to create consumer-driven strategies (Laforet & Tann, 2006). This form of business competitiveness is something which is difficult to achieve in a traditional organization due to their large size, lengthy procedures and hierarchies that limit them to respond to changing environment effectively (Jones & Rowley, 2013). The competitiveness of small entrepreneurial enterprises lies in their ability to develop products and services for the niche markets or sectors ignored by large organizations and allow them to sustain market pressures from well-funded competitors (Hills, 2001). However, the lack of resources both financial and human also limits entrepreneur's ability to create effective marketing communication and their ability to compete with large enterprises (Bettioli, Di Maria, & Finotto, 2012).

In addition, the newness of small ventures also affects their marketing strategy and differentiates it from large organizations (Quinn & Carson, 2003). For instance, the lack of prior relationship with the market results in lack of trust among the customers due to the missing track record of the company and their unknown brand name and a lack of expertise in marketing. This situation prompts new and small business to come up with unconventional marketing strategies to establish and promote business opportunities.

As stated above the entrepreneurial marketing is centered on the entrepreneurs who use their resources in the form of education, social networks, and personal and professional experiences to identify new markets and engage customers. Since the scope of this study is limited to British Muslim entrepreneurial context, therefore, in the next section the researcher will be discussing the resources of ethnic entrepreneurs and how it influences their marketing activities.

4.3 Ethnic Marketing

According to Jamal *et al.* (2015), ethnic marketing is about identifying and satisfying the needs of one or more segment of consumers with a specific ethnicity. Companies and entrepreneurs who are interested in the utilization of opportunities arising from the growth of ethnic minorities in their societies (Jamal *et al.*, 2015) majorly use these marketing practices.

He further states that ethnic entrepreneurs use marketing strategies to target ethnic niche markets (supplying services and goods in their community), markets left by the native businesses, acting as middlemen or intermediary, and targeting indigenous population as primary customers (Aldrich *et al.*, 1984; Ward and Jenkins, 1984; Ward, 1987; Liao, 1992; Ram & Hillin, 1994; Basu, 1995; Dhaliwal & Amin, 1995; Basi & Johnson, 1996; Deakins, 1996; Ram, 1997; Ram & Jones, 1998).

The academic literature on the marketing practices of ethnic entrepreneurs is scarce and depends on their life experiences and distant social position within society (Stokes, 2002; Hill & Wright, 2000). For instance, Altinay and Altinay (2008), have interviewed 227 ethnic Turkish entrepreneurs in the UK. Their findings suggest that these entrepreneurs utilize conventional marketing approach in their businesses in the form of transactional and relationship marketing. They argued that their target market influences the marketing strategies

of these entrepreneurs, educational background and sectors of operation (Altinay & Altinay, 2008).

In addition, ethnic entrepreneurs (mostly south Asians) in the UK use low prices, direct and relationship marketing to create a long-term relationship with their customers (Jamal, 2003; Jamal, 2005, Jamal, 2015). However, Seaman *et al.* (2005), contest this notion by arguing that ethnic entrepreneur's lack comprehensive understanding of market competition and their marketing strategies vary from customer to customer and changes on a daily basis.

He argues that these entrepreneurs lack customized customer feedback mechanism which results in a lack of communication and the attainment of marketing objectives. What customer wants depends more upon the intuition of these entrepreneurs rather than actively collecting consumer data (Seaman *et al.*, 2005). The main marketing strategy these entrepreneurs use is the low price mechanism while completely neglect differentiation, fast delivery, quality leadership and changing market trends (Seaman *et al.*, 2005).

In order to remain competitive most of the immigrant generation, entrepreneurs use cultural values such as hard work, reliance on family members, thrift, and working long hours to gain a competitive edge in the market (Werbner, 1990; Waldinger *et al.*, 1990). Although most of these entrepreneurs are not educated and lack native language speaking skills, they tend to give importance to the education of their offspring and want them to attain a better quality of life (Jamal, 2005).

The result of the university education makes the second and third generation ethnic entrepreneurs more sophisticated and efficient in terms of managing the business and creating result-oriented marketing strategies (Dhaliwal, 2004). Unlike, their parents, the second and third generation depend less on ethnic and family resources and use contemporary marketing and management practices in line with changing market dynamics (Dhaliwal, 2004).

McPherson (2007), compared first-generation of British South Asian entrepreneurs with second-generation entrepreneurs. He concludes that first-generation entrepreneurs mostly employ ad-hoc, reactionary, low cost, risk-free marketing strategies. Whereas, second – generation tend to be more organized and efficient in terms of creating synergy between the 4 P's and use risk driven technological tools to implement their marketing strategies. However, both of the respondents' groups use the customer-centric approach to market their products and services but lack any formal customer policy (Jamal, 2005, Clarie et al., 2005, Altinay 2008).

In contrast to the mainstream view of technology as an important tool in the marketing arsenal, the majority of the ethnic entrepreneurs give less value in terms of making it part of their marketing strategies. Agarwal and Dahm (2005), conducted a study on the success factors of ethnic restaurants (mainly Asian and European) in the United States. Their study identified that most of the ethnic entrepreneurs consider good service and value pricing better than the use of any new technology to gain customer loyalty.

The use of technology as a way to market one's product and services is considered less important among immigrant entrepreneurs (Agarwal & Dahm, 2005). However, the growing popularity of the internet as a social and economic tool is changing the way businesses are operating in the 21st century and prompting ethnic entrepreneurs to integrate it with their core marketing strategies (El-Fataty *et al.*, 2011).

The era of digital networks and mobile-enabled technologies has made it easier for ethnic entrepreneurs to identify and engage niche markets (El-Fataty *et al.*, 2011). As stated above, the cultural and religious understanding of the ethnic consumer by the ethnic entrepreneurs allow them to create relevant marketing strategies which satisfy their unique needs.

Anwar and Daniel (2015), have conducted an empirical study regarding the use of online media by ethnic entrepreneurs in the UK. Their findings suggest that *“the resources available to the entrepreneurs are shaped by their migrant heritage and that they draw on these resources to market their online businesses”* (Anwar & Daniel, 2015.p.1).

The marketing approach of these ethnic entrepreneurs is not limited to the virtual world, but they also incorporate offline marketing activities to identify and target market. For instance, the majority of these entrepreneurs use family and community ties, friends and business contacts as a way for introduction and recommendation in the market. After the introduction in the online world these entrepreneurs use social media and word of mouth marketing to bring the potential customers to the online world. The low entry cost linked with online marketing allows these marketers to increase their market reach and learn new ways to attract customers without burdening themselves financially (Anwar & Daniel, 2015).

These findings are in line with the research conducted by Anwar and Daniel, (2014), as they interviewed online ethnic entrepreneurs (mostly south Asian origin). Their result suggests that more and more ethnic entrepreneurs who are well versed in IT skills are breaking out of the traditional highly competitive and low margin businesses to online businesses which are not only less competitive but also require minimal marketing budget.

In the subsequent academic article presented by Anwar and Daniel, (2016), they conducted the interviews of 22 online business ethnic entrepreneurs living in the UK. Their findings suggest that marketing activities of these entrepreneurs are influenced *“by their personal skills, qualifications and interests”* (Anwar and Daniel, 2016.p. 16). Even if these ethnic entrepreneurs lack marketing or IT skills, they learn it from their family and friends or outsourced to professional agencies (e.g., SEO Marketing firms).

These ethnic entrepreneurs also gain marketing understanding by incremental experimentation, learning-by-doing and by observing the marketing activities of their competitors which include

adopting and coping their successful marketing strategies as appropriate (Anwar and Daniel, 2016). Moreover, these entrepreneurs also use their ethnic resources such as cultural and religious knowledge of their community to identify and target market. For instance, one of the entrepreneur market ethnic clothes online and say that common cultural heritage makes it easier for her to build relevant marketing communication online.

In addition, ethnic entrepreneurs are also involved in writing reviews on various professional forms in order to build their expertise in the mind of their customers. These reviews allow them to differentiate themselves from their competitors and become distinctive in the market (Anwar & Daniel, 2016).

As stated by various academics (; Dhaliwal, 2004; Jamal, 2005; McPherson, 2007; Anwar & Daniel, 2015) the cultural and religious background of the ethnic entrepreneur play an important role in terms of influencing their marketing strategies. In the next section, we will discuss this topic in detail and try to understand how the interplay of culture and religion influence ethnic marketing.

Pires and Stanton (2005), argued that companies have to understand the cultural and religious specific (Jamal, 2014), needs of ethnic consumers in order to create effective marketing strategies. As stated by Castells, the network economy has transformed the traditional notion of the melting pot theory (complete assimilation of the ethnic minority into host society) into a fruit salad where various ethnic groups retain their core value systems. However, they tend to integrate their values with the norms of host society in accordance with their requirements (2011).

This form of cultural mosaic approach has allowed ethnic entrepreneurs to attain the status of cultural intermediaries (Oswald, 1999) and enabled their customers to engage in cultural

swapping (Luna *et al.*, 2008). In other words, Ethnic marketing provides ethnic entrepreneurs a competitive advantage in terms of using their knowledge of their religion, culture, and ethnicity to identify and satisfy niche ethnic markets. These entrepreneurs integrate their ethnic values with the culture of the host country and associate new cultural meaning to their products and services. The integration of jeans with Muslim women Abaya is a prime example of how entrepreneurs and consumers are using cultural bricolage to create new cultural meanings (Kamel, 2014). Jamal (2009), argued that the ability of ethnic entrepreneurs to identify new markets based on similar ethnic values makes them more innovative in terms of creating and implementing their marketing strategies.

As stated by Nwankwo *et al.* (2012), "*religion offers a unique context in terms of having a specific social base and particular cultural expression that could be exploited to explain ethnic marketing*" (p.151). For instance, religious and cultural places of these entrepreneurs (Mosque and community centres) act as a social hub for the ethnic community and allow its members to share resources for personal and collective growth (Kraybil *et al.*, 2010). These social platforms allow ethnic entrepreneurs to identify their targeted consumers and market their products and services (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2012). The development of the social network in these centres allows entrepreneurs to increase referrals, enhance word of mouth marketing and balance their customer relationship management. Moreover, similar language and value system increase the trust factor among ethnic entrepreneurs and their consumer and allow them to attain a long-term relationship (Dhaliwal, 2004).

At present, the researcher has discussed how religion and culture enable ethnic entrepreneurs to identify markets and engage customers on the basis of similar cultural and religious experiences. In the next section, the researcher will further discuss the role of religion by specifically selecting Islamic religion and how it influences entrepreneurial marketing.

4.4 Islamic Marketing

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions with a population of over 1 billion people around the globe (Lewis, 2003; Scupin, 2008; Wilson & Liu, 2011). The Muslim population in the United Kingdom (UK) is growing with a rate of 6.7 % annually and expected to become one of the largest religious communities in the UK by 2050 (Ferguson, 2011).

The increase in population (especially young Muslim population) and per capita income of Muslims and the decline of mainstream population in Europe have turned Muslims into a high potential consumer segment for organizations (Nestorovic, 2013). Notably, the immigrant's parents in the UK are paying more attention to the education of their offspring (Weedon *et al.*, 2013), which could result in their better economic future and increase their consumer spending (Clark & Drinkwater, 2010).

Even though half of the Muslim population was born out of the United Kingdom, 73% of the British Muslim consider themselves as British (The Muslim Council of Briton, 2015). The second and third generation also identify themselves as Muslim (Modood *et al.* 1997, (O'Beirne, 2004) and give low priority to the identity of their home country (Jacobson, (2006). Muslims in Britain wants to live their lives in accordance with Islamic principles and prefer Sharia-oriented consumption practices (Ahmed, 2008).

Jamal (2005), argue that another reason for the rise of Islamic marketing is that the Muslims who immigrated to western countries mainly in Europe and UK never had to worry about *Halal* and *Haram* concept in their own countries. It is only when they arrive in the new country they are confronted with the dilemma of Islamic and non-Islamic consumerism. This form of

dilemma has influenced them to become conscious in terms of only buying those products and services which are permitted or in line with the teaching of Islam.

According to Paul temporal (2011), “*the next wave of global branding will come from Islamic economies and companies*” (p.xi). Temporal argue that with rising income and prosperity the Muslim consumers are following their love for consumer goods and services in the same way as their counterparts enjoy in the west.

Temporal further contends that at present, there is tremendous business activity going on among Muslims both in Muslim and the non-Muslim world worth trillions of dollars. The increasing business activity and the understanding of the influence of brand on real-time earning are prompting Islamic companies and entrepreneurs to come up with Islamic brands that satisfy the needs of the growing Muslim middle class (2011).

In addition, Muslim countries and communities in the west want to see their brand grow since they understand the influence of brands in terms of creating a positive image of not only products and services but also countries and mainly Islam (2011). The rise of the new Muslim middle class in the Middle East and Western Europe is also forcing multinational organizations to explore this new market and create their products and services in line with Muslim aspirations and belief system (Chittenden, 2010, Colvin, 2009 and Ferguson, 2011, Bassiouny, 2014).

In general, religion is known as an important influencer on the media usage, advertising appeal and buying behaviour of consumers (Emslie et al., 2007; Lindridge, 2005; Rice & Al-Mossawi, 2002; cf. Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2004). In this context, one can assume that religion also plays a vital role in the buying behaviour of Muslims around the globe (Abou-Youssef, Kortam, Abou-Aish, & El-Bassiouny, 2011).

According to Sandikci and Ger (2011), there are two distinct periods in the scholarship of Islamic marketing in the form of Omission and Discovery. The omission phase refers to the point of time in history when there was a scarcity of academic research work related to religion and business in general and Islam and consumerism in particular.

Sandikci and Ger (2011), asserted that the reason behind the omission of Muslims as the potential consumer market is linked to their marginalization based on the assumption that they are uneducated people from low-income groups. Although, there were people from middle eastern backgrounds who have invested much money in the west still the general perception of Muslim as poor remain intact in the eyes of the west and the scholarly circles.

Another reason for the omission was the stereotyping of Muslims in the west as uncivilized and militant individuals (Sandikci & Ger, 2011). As Edward Said famously pointed out in his book Orientalism, that the West consider Muslims as the “*other*” and inferior people who are against the values promoted by West (democracy, justice, equality, etc). Said argued that western literature on Muslims depicts them as “*feminized, weak, irrational, and the other in contrast to the rational, strong, masculine west*” (Sandikci & Ger 2011.p.g 486).

This kind of general assumption about Islam has led to an idea that the latter is incompatible with modern day capitalistic system and consumer society (Kuran, 2004). The proponents of this view justify their stand by giving the perspective of Islamic economics (Kuran, 2004).

As stated by Kuran (2004), the perspective of Islamic economics (Islamic literature derived from medieval Islamic thought) consider Islam as the only solution to the current global challenges. He asserts that Islamic economics perspective deliberately rejects western consumer lifestyle and considers it as decadent, crass and corrupting traditional values which only results in hedonism and selfish individualism (2004).

Kuran (2004) concluded that this form of Islamic literature urges Muslims to live a modest lifestyle and abstain themselves from the evils of western form of consumer culture which only increase endless desires and excessive consumption habits. The total rejection of western values has not only created further divisions between Islam and capitalism but also fostered militancy in the Muslim world (2004).

While there are Muslims, who differentiate between Islamic consumer values and modern-day capitalistic system. Some western sociologists argue the same incompatibility of Islam with western consumer culture but provide different reasons. For instance, Barber (1996) consider the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as the direct result of "*condition of the post-modern world*" (Sandikci & Ger, 2011.p.487) *which has created the pluralization of lifeworlds through the spread of a global system of consumption*" (p.487).

In the same line Turner (1994), argue that the pluralistic lifestyle in the culture, style, and aesthetic brought by the current capitalistic system is in contrast with the Islamic fundamentalist beliefs who crave for a unified world which revolve around unchangeable Islamic values and belief system.

Islam has a clear perspective on the role of consumption in the daily lives of the Muslims and considers it as a victorious act (Alserhan, 2011). *Allah* has already stated in *Quran* that I have made this world and everything in it for you now it is your responsibility to identify the things I have created for personal and societal welfare (Alserhan, 2011). In this way, one will be able to become an ideal Muslim and will get closer to *Allah* (Temporal, 2011).

According to Amin *et al.* (2014), unlike the prevalent consumerist society which is based on excessive consumption of endless desire, Islam preach moderation and balance. Islam identifies two characteristics in people in terms of their consumption habits namely *Israf* (extravagant/

excessive) and *Bukhl* (miserliness). Each of these characteristics is prevalent in our consumer society and holds an important place in the mindset of consumers around the globe.

Amin *et al.* (2014), explains that *Israf* is not only against excessive consumption of legitimate needs but it also includes not spending a single penny on things which are prohibited in Islam like consumption or exchange of alcohol or pork meat. Moreover, *Israf* also means not spending a fortune on things which gives one the satisfaction of attaining personal fame and show off instead of seeking Allah's pleasure (2004).

On the other hand, *Bukhl* means the inability of a person to spend on his/her legitimate needs including his family and society in accordance with his financial worth and social status. Consumption in Islam aims to limit one's material desires to physiological and spiritual needs and use the leftover human energy to seek god pleasure by spending it on the social development of society (2004).

The interest in the field of Islamic marketing is growing among academics and market practitioners in terms of inquiry and requires the further conceptual development of the subject (Arham, 2010; Alserhan, 2011; Sandikci, 2011; Wilson, 2012). Due to the current global environment, Islamic marketing is increasingly becoming an essential topic "*for any global and forward-thinking marketer*" (Wilson, 2012, p.6).

The Islamic paradigm of marketing is in contrast with the conventional and western-oriented definitions of marketing which perceived the latter as a process to identify and satisfy the needs of the customers for the sake of personal profit (Kotler, Armstrong, 2010). The ultimate purpose of traditional marketing is to give benefit to the organization and individual customer, but it has little regard for the social welfare of the society at large (Hunt, 1981; Kilbourne *et al.*, 1997; Mittelstaedt *et al.*, 2006).

In addition, the objective of mainstream marketing is to create false needs among consumers and emphasize consumerism, materialism, the undervaluation of the rights of vulnerable groups and deceptive advertising practices (Postman, 1994; Klein, 1999; Buckingham, 2000; Cook, 2004; Hawkes, 2004; Mick *et al.*, 2004; Abela, 2006; Friel & Falk, 2007; Mick, 2007; Abela & Murphy, 2008; El-Bassiouny, Taher, & Abou-Aish, 2008; Boush *et al.*, 2009; Goleman, 2009; Lindstrom, 2009).

Rice (1999), argued that when organizations give more value to profit maximization instead of other legitimate business goals and use deceptive tactics to appeal to various consumer desires (e.g., sexual). Than such promotion of materialism make consumers feel that their actual worth depends upon what they consume. This results in the rise of material consumption and an endless competition among consumers which gives way to the values of greed and envy in society (El-Bassiouny, 2014).

The development of such a hazardous environment increases the wastefulness of planet resources, the disintegration of the environment, social harms which include psychological and physical damage and lack of sustainability (Rice, 1999).

Abdul-Matin (2011), contend that in contrast the Islamic marketing model is based on the values of ethics and morality and global solidarity which allow them to play a vital role in the preservation of the plant and sustainable consumption practices. He argues that the ethics in Islamic marketing go beyond the notions of societal marketing and ethical marketing by providing a theological dimension to it. Societal marketing is all about creating a balance between organizational profits, value to customer and protection of environment e (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Kotler & Armstrong, 2006).

El-Bassiouny (2014), state that Islam is different from societal marketing since it also talks about God-consciousness and virtuous intentions. Islam provides a moral belief that

emphasizes individual and collective well-being for the sake of attaining *Allah's* pleasure since it is the only route to gain spiritual and material success (2014). At the same time, Islam discourages short-term profit and excessive materialism which creates divisions among society based on class and social status (2014).

According to Saeed *et al.*, (2001), human inherently crave for universal values which can build stability in their lives irrespective of race or religion. Muslim believes that Islam has those universal value systems which work not only for the benefit of one person but has its impact on the overall society. Therefore, in the context of marketing, the admission of false advertising promises, conducting unethical research, and misleading people is consider an act against Islam (Saeed *et al.*, 2001), since it has a negatively effects on vulnerable groups such as poor, children, women etc. (Abela, 2006; Abela & Murphy, 2008; Boush *et al.*, 2009; Buckingham, 2000; Cook, 2004; Friel & Falk, 2007; Goleman, 2009; Hawkes, 2004; Klein, 1999; Lindstrom, 2009; Mick, 2007; Postman, 1994).

Moreover, Islamic marketing is based on the idea of abundance mentality (Covey, 2003). In other words, it means God has already allocated *Rizq* (Provision or sustenance) in the destiny of every human being. Therefore, it is up to humans to attain it by believing in God and through their actions as determined by Islam (2003).

According to As-Sibaa'ie (2005), Islam provides clear-cut guidelines on a very important factor that influence marketing known as competition. Since *Allah* has already assigned the particular amount of *Rizq* to every person, then the idea of competition in Islam is turned into collective teamwork to achieve betterment for the overall society instead of competing for self-interest alone (As-Sibaa'ie, 2005). Once the individual believes that the actions they performed are supposed to bring them close to *Allah* than they will promote cooperation and discourages competitive rivalry (As-Sibaa'ie, 2005).

Before divulging further into this topic, one should realize that Islamic marketing is not about selling products on the name of religion (Temporal, 2011). Instead, it is a communication process which calls consumers to embrace Islamic values as part of their consumer identity in order to become closer to God and achieve both materialistic and spiritual success (Temporal, 2011). Hence one can say that Islamic marketing is about formulating such marketing strategies which value Islamic ideology (Alserhan, 2011).

Muslim entrepreneurs consider Islam crucial for successful business endeavours since it enriches in them the values of honesty, trust, mutual respect and friendliness essential for effective customer management (Papanek, 1972). The Muslims believe that their ability to incorporate Islamic with modern marketing practices has enabled them to become successful in their respective fields and allowed them to create a positive brand image in the minds of their customers (Benzing *et al.*, 2009).

The integration of Islamic values in the way Muslims entrepreneurs market their products has paved the way for the newly emerging field of Islamic marketing which has the potential to increase brand value and sales of their products (Alserhan & Alserhan, 2012). Islamic marketing is a process through which a marketer identifies customer's need in accordance with Islamic principles and satisfy it as per the spirit of Sunnah (teachings of *Quran*) (Temporal, 2011). In this context marketer/ entrepreneur sell their products and services for the sake of attaining *Allah's* servitude and for the personal and collective benefit of society (Marinov, 2007).

As stated by Sandıkcı and Ger (2007), the new age of globalization and network society (Castells, 2008) has influenced the way Muslims perceive and articulate their identity and consumption practices. Sandıkcı and Ger (2007), conclude that the integration of Islamic inspirations with capitalistic motivations has created a niche Muslim consumer segment. The

grouping will not only satisfy the demands of emerging Muslim consumers, but it will create a positive image of Muslims around the globe.

As stated by Wilson (2012), Islamic marketing is a realization of the existence and omnipresence of *Allah* among marketers and consumers that compels them to live their social and economic life in accordance with Islamic teachings. According to Sula and Kartajaya (2006), four characteristics provide a working definition of Islamic marketing. These characteristics include spirituality, ethics, realism, and humanism.

The first characteristic is spirituality which means believing in one God and submitting one will to *Allah* by proactively obeying his teachings as mentioned in *Quran* and *Sunnah* both in theory and practice. The acknowledgment of God-consciousness drives the follower to take responsibility for his/her actions since they know that they are accountable for their deeds in front of the supreme lord (2006).

The second characteristic is the belief in one God results in the formation of the ethics (in other words Islamic ethics) which provide the follower a framework to live in this world. Hence, it is the responsibility of the marketers to create marketing practices in line with Islamic ethics and moral standards as mention in Islam (2006).

The third characteristic is being realistic in one's approach. It means marketers must not rigidly interpret *the Quran* or blindly following the words without understanding its underlying meaning. Islam gives more importance to the content as compare to appearance. Therefore, marketers must make decisions which give more value to the moral standards mentioned in *the Quran* and to the collective good, instead of immoral acts and self-interest. For instance, there are certain things forbidden in Islam, e.g. pork or non-Halal food. However, Muslims are allowed to consume them if they know for sure that there is no alternative exists. It is up to

Muslims to make a right call since Allah has already given them free will and the ability to differentiate right from wrong (Sula & Kartajaya, 2006).

The fourth characteristic is humanism which means that the decision of the marketers must keep in mind the collective good of society which includes the sustainability of both people and the environment. Hence, Islam has a very clear view of green marketing not just because of its sustainable appeal but also to the idea that as Allah has made human being his/her vicegerent or *Ashraful Makhluqat* (The best creature of all creation) hence it is their responsibility to protect God's land and everything in it (Sula & Kartajaya, 2006).

According to Arham (2011), in accordance with traditional marketing, Islamic marketing strategy is also divided into three parts namely segmentation, targeting and positioning. Gunara and Sudiby (2007), state that Muhammad (PBUH) in his time use to segment the market on the basis of geography, demographics, and psychographics. During his lifetime, Muhammad (PBUH) was a trader and use to trade in the markets of Bahrain. In those days he used to familiarize himself with the geography of the market which was the market of Bahrain, the socio-economic status of the consumer (demographics) in that market including the lifestyle (psychographics) they use to live (2007).

The second part of the strategy is about targeting. If we study the business life of Muhammad (PBUH), we will realize that he used to sell his products to everyone in the market. In modern marketing term, we term this approach as the traditional marketing approach. It means that organizations create the same products for different markets in order to achieve maximum profits (Arham, 2011).

The third aspect of marketing strategy is positioning. Muhammad (PBUH) never really positioned his products in the market; instead, he positioned himself by being ethical and moral. In the market and in his personal life, Muhammad was considered as Al- amen (Trustworthy)

and Al-Sadiq (the Truthful). When consumers use to buy his products they knew that they are buying a quality product with a fair price since the person selling it to them is known for his integrity, honesty and mentioning not only good aspects of his products but also its weakness.

Islam has a clear set of guidelines regarding business practices in general and Islamic marketing in particular. However, it also entails specific implications which could make it difficult for marketers to deal with Islamic marketing. These implications range from various interpretations of the *Quran* and *Sunna* to the ability of Muslims to critically analyse Islamic marketing (Jaffer, 2012).

According to Islamic principles, *Allah* has already formulated Islamic theology; however, its interpretation is context based and geographically dependent (Wilson & Liu, 2011). In other words, it means that the *Quranic* interpretation of one person living in the United States might be different from the theologian living in Saudi Arabia since both of these societies have unique culture and environment (Wilson & Liu, 2011).

These varied forms of interpretations have the potential to give alternative ways to resolve the same issue and might result in further complications (Jafari, 2012). Hence, it is crucial for Islamic marketers to realize this dilemma and develop culturally specific strategies to engage consumers since the idea of one Muslim Umma or Muslims having similar cultural values has become outdated (Wilson & Liu, 2011, Saeed, 2001).

According to Jaffer (2012), the advancement in Islamic marketing requires one to accept the various interpretations of Islam as long as they are in line with rational argument and the core Muslim belief system. He also argues that one should not perceive Islam as a reductionist ideology but a belief system which has the potential to evolve in accordance with core Islamic tenants and changing global dynamics.

Jaffer (2012), further assert that the confinement of Islam to *Halaal* (permissible) *Haram* (not permissible), *Mustahabb* (favoured) and *Makruh* (disliked), reward (zest for the Paradise), and punishment (fear of God) which influence Muslim mindset and actions are not going to create any positive outcome for Islam and Muslims. Such terms are misrepresented, misunderstood and oversimplified in the marketing literature (Alserhan, 2010; Wilson and Liu, 2010) and create complicated constructs which should be analysed in line with other complicated subjects, e.g. Ideological dynamics, identity discourses, consumer resistance and agency, including the changing religious environment (Jaffer, 2012). Therefore, if we limit Islam to the rigid definitions of such terms, then one will not be able to add anything substantial in the existing knowledge of Islamic marketing. Since these rigid interpretations will not make it easier for one to understand the paradoxes of Muslims consumption practices worldwide (Jaffer, 2012).

The third implication in Islamic marketing is the lack of Self-critique and reflexivity by both academics and practicers which could make them fell into the self-fascination mode (Jafari, 2012). The reason behind using the concept of critique in such matter is that the latter is considered an important tool for the advancement in knowledge. Critical analysis challenges overstatements, taken-for-granted assumptions, establish dialogues, develop further ideas and improve the process of reflexivity (Jafari, 2012).

The traditional view of Islam among Muslims is that it is a perfect religion and there is no need to put it under the lens of rationality and reflexivity (Jafari, 2012). Although one may not argue on the core tenets of Islamic ideology the departure of rational critique from its varied interpretation will lead to stagnation in the development of Islamic marketing knowledge and promote blind fellowship (Jafari, 2012).

Moreover, one's main objective should be not to interpret Islamic marketing in the context of Islamic theology but how these varied interpretations of Islam affect consumer lifestyles. As

stated by Jafari (2012), this does not require any metaphysical surgery of Islam in order to prove that the religion is sacred. As agreed amongst Muslims, Islam is a “*transcendental reality*), which stands above the reality of society” (Jafari & Su’erdem, 2012. P.24). This form of argument is in contrast with the idea of the social construction of religion by the people (Durkheim, 1984/1893). Muslims consider Islam as an ultimate reality and are willing to incorporate its principals in their daily lives (Jafari, 2012).

Also, it has been a known fact that Muslim thinkers sacralise their religion while keeping in mind that this form of attitude will positively serve the cause of Islam. However, they fail to realize that making the religion sacred will only hinder self-examination, reflexivity, and flexibility and self-critique (Sanei, 1998). For example, if one compares Islamic philosophy with western philosophy, one might realize that the former is far more behind than the latter due to lack of reflexivity and critique (Shabestari, 2000; Akhtar, 1997).

The issue with Islamic philosophy is that it has been merged with religion and has been sacralised. This form of emersion is not Islamic (since Islam promotes rationalism) and nether philosophical (because the main goal of philosophy is to identify the realities of the world through rational thought) in nature (Darrehbidi, 1998. Cf from Jafari, 2012). One can observe this form of Islamic philosophy is dominated in humanities and social sciences subjects in the Muslim world and results in the development of Muslim scholarship which is looking backward instead of forward (Darrehbidi, 1998. Rf from Jafari, 2012).

Hence, the previous and current Islamic scholarship has been seen as negating the growth of consumer culture as part of the western conspiracy or cultural imperialism or monotonously explaining the concepts of *Halal* and *Haram*. They are not examining contemporary issues in the form of global consumer culture, identity conflicts and paradoxes of market development and their influence on Muslims in an innovative way. Therefore, one needs to use the tools of

critique to not only extend the horizons of Islamic knowledge but bring back the core of Islamic ideology which is based on self-reflection and creativity.

At present, the researcher has discussed entrepreneurial marketing literature within the context of ethnicity and Islam. In the next section, the researcher will examine the growing use of social media among entrepreneurs and how they use it to identify markets and engage customers.

4.5 Social Media Marketing

Digital media and more specifically social media is a place that gives entrepreneurs the ability to create their niche market and compete equally with large the organizations in terms of market access and consumer engagement (Kaplan, 2012). The digital medium provides entrepreneurs with cost-effective ways to reach consumers and enhance two-way communication (Qualman, 2010).

The study conducted by Jagongo and Kinyua (2013), shows that entrepreneurs are primarily using social media for easy access to both the diversified and niche market and enhancing the quality of client relationship management (CRM) through active feedback. The study projects that social media allows entrepreneurs to communicate swiftly and cost-effectively with the potential and existing customers. The report suggests that social media gives the entrepreneurs an opportunity to develop a rich customer database which can be used to generate business leads and results in the growth of small business.

Qualman (2010), states that social media platform has given entrepreneurs a new way to market business offerings and enhance consumer contact to compete in the changing consumer market effectively. He further argues that social media makes it easier for entrepreneurs to take risks,

be innovative and imitate global marketing practices into their local context. The infinite information available on social media enables entrepreneurs to identify, evaluate and utilize market opportunities for individual and collective benefits (Kaplan, 2012).

The use of social media can be cost-effective for entrepreneurs and allows them to increase their market reach and create a positive image of the brand through word of mouth (Qualman, 2012). Nevertheless, it can also have an opposite effect on business as well, if the entrepreneurs are not able to comply with the customer demands (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The customers on social media have more control in terms of influencing brand image through the act of making comments (product reviews) and sharing. Therefore, an entrepreneur has to make sure that his or her marketing efforts should be proactive and in line with the changing consumer trends in order to maximize the benefits of social media (Qualman, 2012b).

David Stokes (2011), is one of the prominent scholars on social media marketing and entrepreneurship. He compares social media marketing with traditional marketing techniques and argues that modern-day interactive marketing by the small businesses and entrepreneurs is entirely different from the traditional marketing done by big corporations in the context of four P's (Product, Place, Price, and Promotion). He states that in traditional marketing settings companies use to stress on extensive customer research to come up with needed products and services. However, in the modern age, the successful entrepreneurs are innovation-oriented rather than customer-oriented (as indicated in the theories proposed by Schumpeter and Kirzner). They base marketing decisions on identifying potential opportunities and intuitive market feel instead of thorough evaluation of the consumer through extensive and traditional market research (Stokes 2011).

These entrepreneurs target their market through bottom-up self-selection and feedback of consumers through social media and do not rely on traditional top-down segmentation,

targeting and positioning practices (Stokes, 2011). They prefer online interactive or relationship marketing with their customers as compared to marketing through four Ps due to its passive nature (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

These entrepreneurs know that in today's highly volatile and competitive market continuous communication with the customer and acting upon it is the only way to maintain one's edge in changing business dynamics (Stokes 2011). Communication and effective feedback between the seller and the consumer provides these entrepreneurs the ability to identify strong and weak points of their offering. This information allows them to come up with creative ways to highlight their strengths and resolve their weakness beforehand (Wayburne & Jara, 2012).

Apart from the various positive effects of social media for entrepreneurs, there are also some implications associated with it. For instance, the common assumption about social media is that it has a direct influence on organizational sales (Jagongo, & Kinyua, 2013a). However, one cannot interpret that social media will directly result in increasing the sales of an organization but increase in brand awareness and identification of customer insights that are indirectly responsible for the rise in sales volumes (Jagongo, & Kinyua, 2013b).

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Moreover, Mobile technology has revolutionized the way marketers are using social media to identify new markets and engage customers (Yadav *et al.*, 2015). The growth of mobile social

media has provided users with the freedom to access, consume and share information regardless of time and space restrictions (Kaplan, 2012). The mobile marketing has been in existence since the 90's; through SMS marketing. However, the real breakthrough occurred in 2007 when Apple launched its first I phone and sold more than 500 million (Rogowsky, 2014). This allowed cell-phone users to access 250,000+ applications which gave them the opportunity to read books (Kindle app), search relevant information (Wiki app), make purchasing decisions online (amazon app), book tickets for local and international transport (IRCTC app) and remain in contact with friends and family through WhatsApp and Facebook applications (Kaplan, 2012).

Kaplan (2012) defines "*mobile social media as a group of mobile marketing applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content*" (p.131). Marketers who are using mobile social media are aware of the current location of their customers both in terms of space and time. These consumers/users intentionally give such personal information to the organisation by checking in to their outlets by using various apps (e.g., Foursquare).

If mobile social media allows people to communicate information at any place and time, then one may ask two questions. The first question is why mobile social media users feel the need to update their status on mobile social media (e.g., through check-ins). The answer to this question is in the theories of self-disclosure and self-presentation. (Goffman, 1959, Schau & Gilly, 2003). These theories suggest that people will only share such information that has the potential to enhance their self-image in public spaces.

The second question is why the friends of that individual would want to view them on social media. The simple answer to this question would be because they want to remain aware of the social activities of their friends and to share relevant information (Kaplan, 2012). The sharing of particular information in the form of check-in, commenting and tagging on social media

provides individuals more information about a particular place or what their friends are up to at an exact point in time (Kaplan, 2012). Moreover, mobile social media allows companies to communicate marketing messages to consumers at a specific location and time to generate consumer enthusiasm which has the potential to be effective advertising communication (Kaplan, 2012).

Humphreys (2013), argues that unlike traditional social media, mobile social media can provide companies' research data (with consumer's permission) regarding the movement of individuals, including their consumption habits. Organizations can track consumer movements once they are in their stores through customer check-ins and observe their experience through the comments they publish on their social-mobile apps. For example, MyLahore restaurant based in Manchester regularly monitors customer's tweets regarding their food and experience. When a customer takes pictures of their food while dining in, they tweet it by using a #mylahore hashtag. The restaurant appreciates customer's feedback and re-tweets their picture on all of its social media accounts.

Social media sites make it easy for organizations to collect customer data in the form of their gender, age, number of times a customer checks-in to a particular store, who is the most frequent visitor on their outlets, how many consumers are visiting their outlets and how much time an individual customer spends in their stores. This information informs which outlet the consumer visits the most at what time (Yadav *et al.*, 2015). When this data is efficiently compiled, it is used with other research mining software. It provides retailers with the ability to create effective advertising communication. Although, the traditional view of social media is that it gives more freedom and power to the people. However, in a mobile social media context, such perception of social media becomes reversed (Yadav *et al.*, 2015).

US-based Digital-Warriors Internet Marketing estimates that 76% of businesses worldwide use social media applications for commercial purposes (Dhaheri, 2015). These companies use mobile social media for sensing market, managing client relationships, branding and developing content (Bolat & Kooli, 2015). The individual mobile social media users access social media sites and share content through their smartphones more frequently as compared to connecting through desktop (Kolowich, 2015).

It has been estimated that by the year 2020 cell-phones will become a primary way for individuals to connect to the internet (Kaplan, 2012). *“When people access the internet with their phones, unsurprisingly, they often use social media”* (Donner & Gitau, 2009, cited in Humphreys, 2013). One of the important reasons behind the popularity of mobile social media is its *“production, distribution, and consumption capability through the same device.”* This allows users to increase the speed of the creating and exchanging content in real time and send it to increase the number of potential audiences (Humphreys, 2013).

This form of information is optimistic for marketers but also carries specific implications in the form of customer's privacy, security and trust (Kaplan, 2012). Kaplan argues that unlike the traditional social media which differentiates between the virtual and real life of users, mobile social media integrates the real and the virtual lives and causes users to share their personal information both intentionally and unintentionally. The public display of one's profile and exact geographical location has the potential to endanger the life of users and negatively affect their relationships with their friends and family (Kaplan, 2012). For instance, a website named *“PleaseRobMe.com”* can share the check-in information of foursquare users on their twitter account and make the users vulnerable for robbery and other crimes (Kaplan, 2012).

In order to resolve privacy issues on mobile social media, the United States and Europe have legislated an act called the "Do-NotTrack Online Act of 2011". This act allows users to force

organizations to delete their personal data on their internet sites (Kaplan, 2012). In case, a company is not willing to accept users request to be forgotten; the government has the right to pursue legal action against that particular firm (Kaplan, 2012).

4.5.1 Social Media and Content Marketing

Recently another growing trend linked to social media marketing is the focus given to content marketing. According to Holliman and Rowley (2014, p. 285), "*digital content marketing involves creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcomes*" (p.285). In other words, it is a process of developing personalized valuable content to interact, engage, and target audience.

Du Plessis (2015) further highlights the importance of content marketing by associating it with storytelling. He states that content marketing is a storytelling process and it aims to change the passive consumer behaviour "*by unobtrusive, engaging brand conversations in earned media (social media)* (P.94)". Wuebben (2012), further support the storytelling process by considering it as the main attribute of content marketing. He points out that the objective of storytelling is to interact with the heart and minds of the consumers and make them feel that they are part of the same community.

Academic research on this subject suggest that social media marketing is closely linked with content marketing since both of them have similar business objectives, and their combined focus is on storytelling rather than promotional communications (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Michaelidou *et al.*, 2011; Rose & Pulizzi, 2011; Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). The main objective here is to identify, attract, develop and sustain trust with existing and potential

customers through personalized, relevant and useful content to meet their expectations. (Hubspot, 2015).

As stated by Lee *et al.*, (2018), compelling content that projects human emotions and philanthropic actions has a positive impact on customer engagement. They further argue that firms that project social initiatives on social media tend to gain more social media followers, increase likes (Facebook) and shares which eventually increase their brand awareness and create a positive image of their brands in the mind of their consumers. At the same time, they argue that merely posting product information may harm the brand image on social media. One has to combine product information with emotional appeal in order to become competitive in the social media marketplace.

Berger and Milkman (2012), in their study, argue that people tend to share their emotional experiences on social media networks which increase word of mouth. They further argue that positive content has more opportunity to become viral. The reason behind it is that people want to consider themselves as someone who shares the good news in their community rather than someone who share sad or pessimistic information. Their study also projected that the relationship between individual emotions and level of information transmission is complicated and that arousal drives diffusion of the actual message. Furthermore, social media content that ignites a high level of emotions has more chances to become viral regardless of whether the emotions are negative or positive. However, online content that arouses deactivating emotions (e.g., sadness) has fewer chances of becoming viral.

Järvinen and Taiminen also support these findings, (2016), as they also suggest that social media content must address actual customer needs, including emotional experiences and resolve their key issues instead of promoting organizational products and services alone. They also discussed the importance of web analytics which allows companies to identify and

understand recent consumer behaviour on the internet and use that information to create specific content in accordance with current consumer needs.

In addition, Chan and Astari (2018), argue that the company's characteristics and values play a crucial role in customer engagement. They further state that one can start by sharing content which is relevant to consumer needs. However, later on, it has to be accompanied by organizational values, characteristics, and personal experiences in order to make the consumer feel that they are not speaking with the organization but actual people behind it who have the same beliefs, values and life experiences as their customers.

4.5.2 Social media and Networking

One of the fundamental aspects of Social Media Marketing is the process of networking in order to initiate and conduct online business successfully (Weyburn & Jara, 2012). As stated by Wayburne & Jara (2012), more and more entrepreneurs are using social media networking sites to initiate and conduct new ventures and reach to their customers effectively and efficiently as never before. Social media sites provide them with the opportunity to build and nurture new contacts and to take advantage of existing close contacts in order to seek professional advice, gather information and seek a referral to enhance their business activities, which generate sales (Wayburne & Jara, 2012).

The social networking opportunity offered by the interactive social media has its strengths and weaknesses. It can create new prospects for the entrepreneurial business by giving them access to new markets, gaining consumer insights, and develop and sustain long-term customer relationships for mutual benefits (Kaplan, 2012). On the other hand, social media can have a negative impact on the brand, if the entrepreneur is only using social media to increase sales and not paying attention to providing better customer service (Owen & Humphrey, 2009).

As stated by Quinton and Wilson (2016), Social media has changed the way businesses build digital networks and collaborate to gain organizational objectives. Sood and Pattinson (2012), has researched how information and social exchange on Social media influence and change the level of cooperation among businesses. They illustrate that Social media platforms provided various level of frequent and schedule information exchange (webinar, blogs, email, mobile) and social exchange (e.g., comments, sharing and likes). These forms of social exchange on social media provide businesses with an opportunity to engage in informal coordination and crowdsourcing that results in new ideas generation and "*open-source marketing concept*" (Sood & Pattinson, 2007).

The findings of Sood and Pattinson (2012, 2007) are supported by Wang *et al.* (2016), as they argued that salespeople are using social media to develop *Guanxi* (business relationship). Their study indicates that firms are promoting the use of social media among their sales staff to identify customers online and develop long lasting relationships. The reason behind it is the rapid and simultaneous communication between a sender and multiple stakeholders. The ability of the social media platforms to provide many ways the information can be encoded (e.g., text, emoji's, pictures and videos) including the extent to which the medium enable the sender to fine-tune the message before sending. Wang *et al.* (2016), further argue that these capabilities of Social media platforms have the potential to increase business performance and enable businesses to collaborate, innovate and market their products and services efficiently.

The main objective of businesses within the context of social media collaboration is to create value co-creation among the participants. According to Singaraju *et al.* (2016), social media is a technological platform that enable businesses to proactively pool their resources and develop higher-level resources to benefit each other and realize their optimal value creation potential. They also suggest that "*more efficient resource configurations in the creation, transformation,*

and renewal of resources via resource integration in actor interactions are plausible” (Salo, 2017. P. 117).

As stated by Ozuem *and* Azemi, (2017) social media platforms facilitate crowdsourcing that enables flexible customer-seller interaction. However, Salo *et al.* (2013), suggests that business are reluctant to use Social media for collaboration purposes. The reason for this is the lack of resources, highly customized products, time, money, confidential information, skill gap, and legal matters. However, firms can resolve these issues by encouraging intra- and inter-organisational collaboration (Moor *et al.*, 2013). This form of partnership has a positive effect on product management that results in innovative products and services suitable for market competitiveness (Bughin *et al.*, 2009; Jussila *et al.*, 2014).

The collaboration between businesses is not restricted to the traditional sense of collaboration that only takes into account intra-organizational relationships. The new breed of social media technologies in the form of Instagram and Snapchat has turned some social media users into mini-celebrities with a considerable following. These people act as social media influencers and enable businesses to interact with niche markets.

Gustafsson and Khan (2017), researched the relationship between organizations and entrepreneurial bloggers within the context of social media marketing. Their findings suggest that the size of the blogger readership influence the corporate sector to reach out to those entrepreneurs and use their virtual space for collaborative marketing purposes. They also state that *"being the focal actor, the blogger creates the specific context which attracts stakeholders and makes the opportunity identification possible"* (p.5). Hence one can assume that social media collaboration is based on co-creation of opportunity, *"which emerges at the nexus of blogger's social capital and opportunity identification, evaluation and exploitation process performed by other stakeholders"* (p.5).

At present, we have discussed how entrepreneurs are using Social to network and collaborate in order to co-create value offerings. However, the ability of the businesses to form such partnerships also depends upon the nature of their relationships and their competency to sustain it for the long-term (Quinton and Wilson, 2016).

Quinton and Wilson (2016) conducted a study on the relationships of businesses on LinkedIn. Their main objective was to understand how the business developed and sustained networking and collaborative opportunities on social media and resulted in the new business generation. *"Their research suggests that the membership and participation in LinkedIn groups provide users with a trusted environment and the ability to expand their reach to global audiences and form future business collaborations. The formation of trust in LinkedIn communities depends upon the relevancy of the content created by (p 24)"* the professional dynamics of the group, depth of their knowledge, and the easy access to the profiles of the group members. The ability of the users to quickly assess the credentials and the extent of weak ties of the potential group members expedite the process of relationship development and level of trust. The inclusion of reciprocal and altruistic behaviour among group members (answering the queries of online group members without any self-interest) further enhances the quality of the relationships and prompt members to develop collaborative opportunities.

Quinton and Wilson (2016), further indicated that the formation of relationships are not restricted to the particular online group but also transcends into both virtual and offline multi-channel networks. The increase interaction among participants results in mutual business enhancements *"through collaborative problem solving of technical or specific issues which will improve resource efficiencies, the co-creation of ideas which enhances the credibility of the business in the marketplace. Furthermore, the establishment of new business contracts through the social media networks of individuals which will increase revenue generation and profit"* (Quinton & Wilson, 2016, p. 23).

According to Smith *et al.* (2017), SM has certain features that help businesses to enhance the quality of trust within the communities and create long-lasting relationships. These features include digital user profile, digital search, digital relations, and network transparency. These key "affordances" in turn differentiate the online social networks from offline networks and provide the opportunity to extend the effective utilization of social capital among businesses.

Smith *et al.* (2017), further argue that these features allow businesses to minimize the time and efforts required to identify and engage relevant social networks and create marketing opportunities. For instance, digital user profile allows entrepreneurs to create and edit their personal and professional profile as per their requirements and simultaneously view the profiles of other members of their groups. These features expedite the process of mutual acquaintance and meetups and make the interaction cost effective and less time to consume as compared to offline networking. Simultaneously, digital search plays a vital role in terms of identification of relevant online groups as it provides entrepreneurs the opportunity to quickly reach out to the relevant groups on SM through specific keywords. This form of customization is far more effective and speedy than offline environments as it enables entrepreneurs to identify and establish interpersonal knowledge of each other (Smith *et al.*, (2017).

Moreover, digital relations enable entrepreneurs to create both weak and strong relationships with other members of an online group and develop trust through network transparency. For example, digital relations allow the deepening of bonding between members of the online SM networks through its certain features such as liking, retweeting, commenting and sharing the post of members on Facebook and Twitter. It also enables them to send congratulatory or condolences posts on their happy and sorrow life experiences.

Network transparency enables group members to view not only each other public profiles but also their entire networks (including their friends, previous comments, likings, retweeting.).

This form of openness is unique to online social networks and develops trust between the members which yield to sharing of knowledge and collaboration (Thelwall & Wilkinson, 2010).

Smith *et al.* (2017), further state that these unique features of SM have the potential to increase social capital and trust online among businesses. However, they also called for further research on the Norms (beliefs, values, rules, and attitudes) of a particular network and what behavioural protocols (Habitus) one should acquire to garner social capital within these networks. Smith *et al.* (2017), argue that these norms and habitus within a social network are the key ingredients that enable the businesses to enhance the quality of online social capital and trust that results in further collaboration to gain common objectives.

Academic research in business suggests that firms are increasingly using social media for marketing purposes (Lacka & Chong, 2016). Michaelidou *et al.* (2011), states that firms are using social media to identify new clients, develop relationships and increase brand awareness. Social media provides firms the opportunity to develop their unique brand identity and differentiate it from their competitors. Business to Business (B2B) firms also use social media to generate feedback, conduct market research, grow online communities, develop content and facilitate brand-supporting activities (Breslauer & Smith 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Therefore, the success of an entrepreneurial business on social media depends upon the professional and personal experiences of an entrepreneur including their attitude and perception of the market. The social media marketing literature presented above provide the reader with a conceptual framework in terms of what mindset and skill-set an entrepreneur needs to become competitive in the digital age. The literature also provides entrepreneurs with a foundation that they can use to develop successful enterprises for individual and societal socio-economic benefit.

At present, the academic research regarding the scope of social media marketing is in its infancy (Smith et al. (2017), Bolat & Kooli, 2016). There are only a few academic articles written on this subject and provide a conceptual introduction of social media marketing including its challenges (Quinton & Wilson, 2016; Humphreys, 2013; Kaplan, 2012), and how particular industry is using it to market their products and services ((Bolat & Kooli, 2016; Yadav *et al*, 2015). All of these journal articles accept the growing influence of social media over traditional form of mediums and provide recommendations to businesses (Bolat & Kooli, 2016). These articles further indicate that content marketing and networking are one of the two emerging trends on social media. However, there is a lack of academic research on how business in general and entrepreneurs, in particular, can use content marketing and networking to identify new marketing and engage customers on social media.

4.6 Summary

Academic literature has indicated that there is a strong link between entrepreneurship and marketing. Entrepreneurial marketing is all about identifying and satisfying market gaps through continuous innovation, risk management, resource leveraging and value creation for customers. Academics differentiate between traditional marketing and entrepreneurial marketing by arguing that unlike big businesses, marketing for entrepreneurs is a haphazard (unsystematic) process. It is the entrepreneur who acts as the central figure when it comes to making marketing decisions. Their small size allows them to be more innovative and identify and engage niche markets more efficiently as compared to large business due to red tape. These entrepreneurs may not use conventional marketing strategies due to their limited human and financial resources (Aldrich & Auster, 1986) including a small customer base and limited market power (Carson, 1985). Instead, they develop their own style that is based on their personal intuition, education, social networks, specific market conditions, and competition.

The use of personal intuition and social networks is more prevalent in ethnic marketing literature which suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs use their ethnic and religious resources to identify new markets and engage customers. Most of the ethnic entrepreneurs identify their ethnic group as a primary target market and are using transactional (low pricing, outdoor advertisements) and relationship marketing (in-house customer relationship, etc.) strategies to identify and engage customers. Sometimes, the absence of organized marketing activities results in the loss of the competitive edge in the market and limits the potential of growth.

In addition, most of the ethnic entrepreneurs do not consider technology (internet) as a way to expand their business. They believe good customer relations and low pricing is the only way to compete successfully in the market. However, one does not find this view among the ethnic entrepreneurs (especially second and third generation) who are born, raised and attain their education in the host society. In their view technology is one of the most important tools to identify and target market. Many of these entrepreneurs are going online and using social media as a cost-effective way to reach ethnic customers. However, the current academic data regarding the online marketing activities of ethnic entrepreneurs is limited; one can argue that the growing use of social media by ethnic entrepreneurs might compel academics to investigate this area of research.

The emergence of social media as a cost-effective platform has provided various business opportunities to both business and entrepreneurs and revolutionize the way marketers interact with their customers. Social media allow entrepreneurs the ability to identify and engage niche markets. It is particularly beneficial for ethnic entrepreneurs who are (as indicated by previous research) are side-lined by the mainstream market due to their ethnicity and lack of education and finances. Social media provides them the opportunity to ignite their entrepreneurial spirits by using their religion and ethnic culture not as a mere tool but as a unique selling point to

identify and attract new markets based on similar religious and cultural experience for mutual benefit.

The growing use of mobile technology has made it much easier for businesses to identify and engage customer regardless of time and place barriers. More specifically content marketing on social media allows businesses to develop long-term relationships by sharing both functional and emotional content with their customers and gain long-term relationships. At the same time, the networking potential immersed in social media networks also allow businesses to identify and develop collaborative marketing opportunities for mutual benefits based on similar professional interest and psychographics.

Moreover, the growing importance of Muslim as a new middle class in economic terms and their intentions to make Islam as an important part of their lives has led to the establishment of Islamic marketing as an important academic field. As discussed earlier Islam is not a subset of Marketing, but it provides a new paradigm, which is compatible with social or green marketing approaches. Islamic marketing goes further by incorporating God-consciousness that requires people to follow it in order to attain God pleasure. It provides a strong ethical and moral dimension to the field of marketing and makes it a market activity which must be used for the betterment of entire society instead of giving value to the few people or organizations.

4.7 Conceptual framework

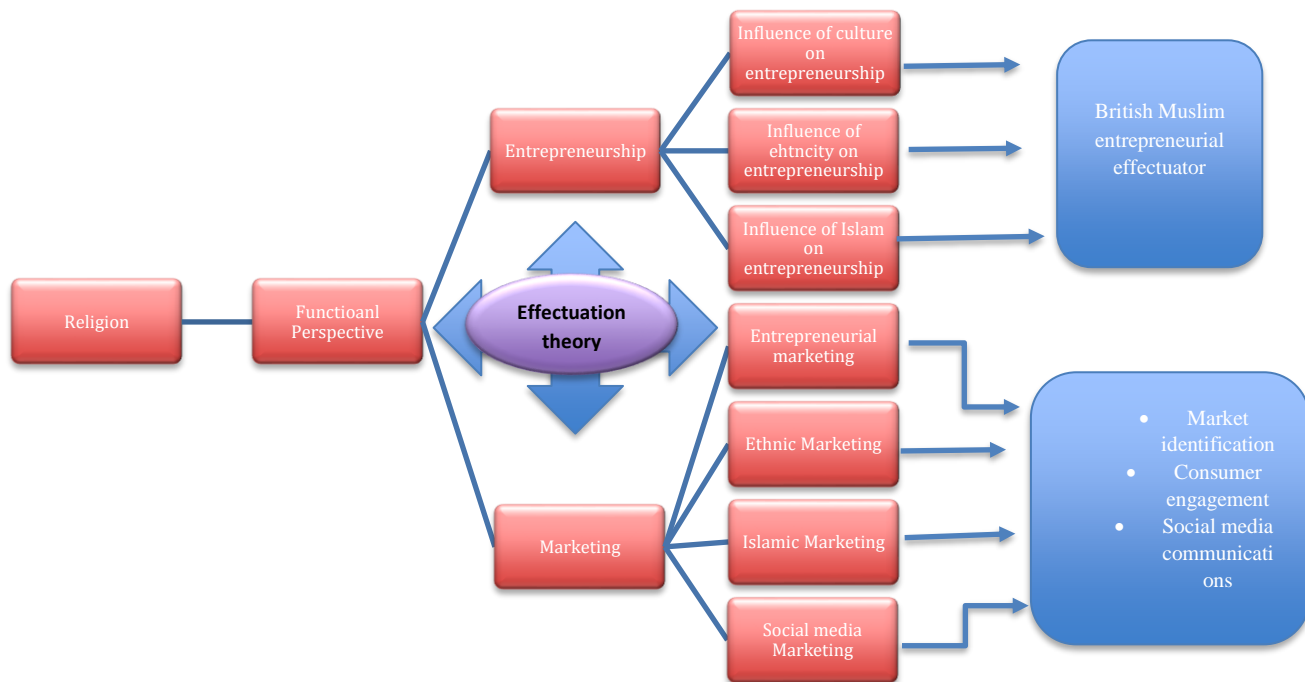


Figure 4.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework stated above portrays religion has a functional purpose in society which allows it to influence effectuator’s marketing actions. By using effectuation theory this research has stated that effectuator (entrepreneur) is the central figure who uses h/her mainstream culture, ethnic experiences and religious beliefs to identify markets and engage customers. Social media marketing within the context of networking and content marketing further provides effectuators the ability to identify new markets and engage customers based on their ethnic and religious experiences.

The important propositions emerging from the conceptual framework suggest that current academic literature on ethnic entrepreneurship and marketing have discussed the influence of mainstream culture, religion, and ethnicity on the entrepreneur’s ability to identify and engage customers. The literature has also examined the role of social media and how it enables

effectuators to identify niche markets and engage based on their ethnic and professional experiences. Most of the academic literature has dealt with ethnic entrepreneurs and how their ethnicity and religion influence their entrepreneurial actions. However, there is lack of academic research on the integration of host culture (British) and ethnic religion (Islam) and how it influences British Muslim effectuator's actions in general and their social media communications in particularly in terms of market identification and customers engagement.

4.9 Key propositions emerging from literature review

The literature review has extensively examined various religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism) and concluded that these religious beliefs have a positive influence on economic development in general and entrepreneurship in particular. The specific guidelines provided by these religions require its adherent to work for both material and spiritual benefit and use their unique potential to create a positive difference in society. Therefore, the first proposition of this research is that religion encourages its adherents to work for individual and societal progress and provide an ethical and moral framework to conduct business activities.

The literature review further emphasizes the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship by stating that entrepreneurial characteristics are not the only ones that influence business actions. Entrepreneurs also use their religious networks, cultural traits and ethnic experiences to identify and engage customers. Therefore, the second proposition of this research suggest that religion, ethnicity, and cultural traits have the potential to influence entrepreneurial actions in terms of market identification and customer engagement.

The focus of academic literature on entrepreneur's characteristics and institutional influences led this research to use effectuation theory since it considers who is the entrepreneur, what they

know (knowledge) and who they know (network) as vital ingredients needed to explore and understand entrepreneurial actions. Although, effectuation theory has discussed the role of the entrepreneur's individual reflexive process and the impact of family and educational institutions on entrepreneurial actions. Hence, the third proposition for this research considers social institutions in the form of family and education has the ability to influence who is the entrepreneur.

In addition, one of the key themes emerged from academic the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship state that ethnic entrepreneurs are pushed into entrepreneurship due to lack of education, inadequate proficiency in a mainstream language, lack of support by financial and government institutions and their unfamiliarity with the local cultural environment. These entrepreneurs use “breaking in approach” by identifying business opportunities within their ethnic communities (enclave economy) and after initial success expand into the mainstream market (middlemen theory). Therefore, the fourth proposition of this research indicates that ethnic entrepreneurs start off from their ethnic the business then expand it into mainstream markets.

Moreover, Existing entrepreneurship literature within the context of ethnicity has indicated that ethnic entrepreneurs are limited to specific offline industries (e.g. restaurants, taxi grocery stores, accountants) (Jamal et al, 2015). There is one academic study conducted on the online retail ethnic businesses (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). They argue that ethnic entrepreneurs are not limiting themselves to established ethnic businesses but using digital media to enter new industries (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). Therefore, the fifth proposition of this research is that ethnic entrepreneurs are using digital media to enter non-ethnic business sectors.

Furthermore, ethnic marketing literature indicates that entrepreneurs mainly use offline transactional and relationship marketing to create product awareness and engage customers. They use haphazard marketing activities, lack customer insights and are not motivated to use technology to grow their business. Nevertheless, the 1st and 2nd generation ethnic entrepreneurs are more innovative than their parent generation since they use digital media to grow their business. They also use their ethnic resources in the form of family and friend's networks on social media platforms to market their products and services. Therefore, the sixth proposition of this research state that ethnic entrepreneurs use their ethnic resources to identify and engage customers on social media platforms.

Moreover, the literature review has discussed the emergence of social media as a cost-effective platform for entrepreneurs to identify markets and engage customers. The literature further emphasizes the role of networking as a way to identify new markets within social media context. For instance, networking suggests that more and more businesses are using social media platforms to build business networks based on similar professional experiences.

Moreover, entrepreneurs are also using content marketing (functional and emotional) to engage customers and build long term relationships. The data further indicate that both networking and content marketing are the tools businesses are increasingly using to identify new markets and engage customers. Hence, the seventh proposition of this research indicates that networks based on similar professional experiences and both functional and emotional content marketing can identify markets and engage customers.

Previous academic research on ethnic networking suggests that religious and cultural places of ethnic entrepreneurs (Mosque and community centres) act as a social hub for the ethnic community and allow its members to share resources for personal and collective growth (Kraybil *et al.*, 2010). Anwar & Daniel, (2016; 2015), argued that ethnic entrepreneurs in the

UK utilize their extended family networks and ethnic community to acquire both marketing and financial capital. The reason behind is the government and private sector support which limits the ethnic entrepreneurs to their own ethnic and religious networks to resolve their day to day business issues. Therefore, the eight propositions of this research is that ethnic entrepreneurs only use their own ethnic and religious networks to seek business guidance and resolve their business issues.

Chapter 5 Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter has provided an outline of the research philosophy within the context of ontology and epistemology. Ontologically, this research is leaning towards constructivism since its focus is on exploring the participants religious (Islamic) beliefs which vary from person to person. Constructivism rejects the idea of a universal belief system and argue that individual interpretation of their beliefs changes in accordance with their social context (Saunders et al., 2003, North, 2016).

Epistemologically, this research is leaning towards interpretivism, since it argues that one of the fundamental ways to explore individual religious beliefs is by interacting with the research participant. Interpretivist approach state that research is an interactive and co-constructed activity and the outcome of it depends upon the personal interaction between the researcher and the researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, this research has used an in-depth interview method to explore the religious belief system of the research participants and how it influences their social media activities in terms of market identification and customer engagement (Note: further justification of philosophical and methodological approaches are provided in later sections).

This chapter also included the participants' recruitment and sampling process and considered the ethical consideration of this research. This research has used thematic analysis to develop a coding framework (see Appendix 3 page 330) to identify, evaluate and present key themes. The last part of this chapter examined the reliability and validity of this research study. The chapter also provides a table of codes which are initially developed from the literature

review. Figure 5.1 further provides a model which depicts the overall research methodology in this research.

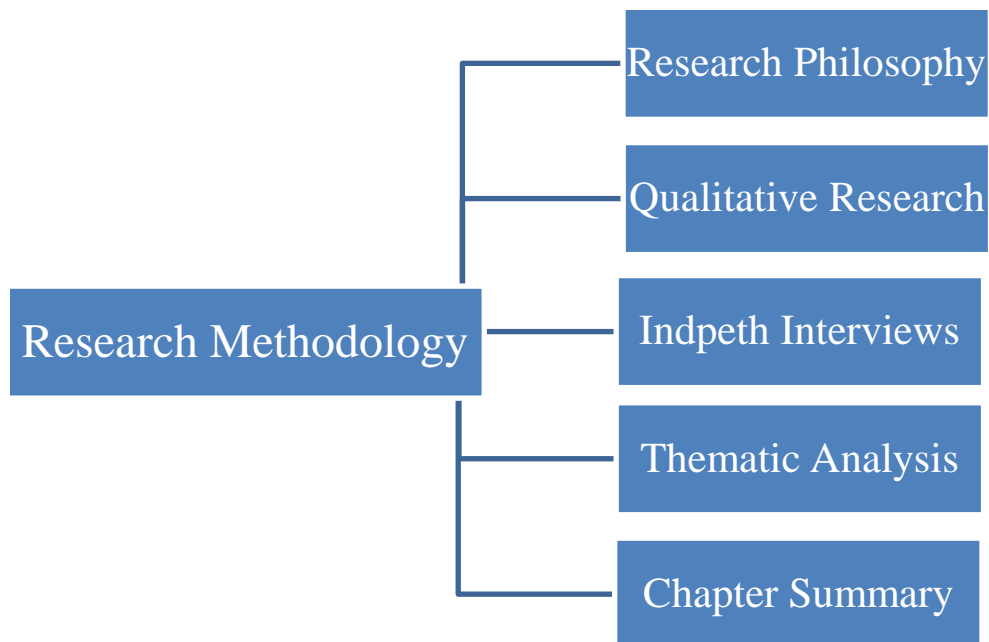


Figure 5.1 shows the research methodology for this research.

5.2 Research Methods

As stated by Stausberg and Engler (2011), “*methods are rules of the game in a scholarly work*” (p.4). A method is a Greek word, where *Meta* refers to “after” and *Odos* means “way.” Together they referred to as a planned way to create and organize specific procedures to do things. It is mostly agreed that methods along with concepts, categories, and theories are foundational for empirical research. One must not limit oneself to the empirical or scientific way to collect data but also utilize theories and concepts accepted by the respective academic community to make scientific judgments.

Stausberg and Engler (2011), elaborated that scientific method means a form of procedure which is usually considered a common and accepted mode of practice in the scientific

community including humanities. In the context of theories, the role of the method is to construct, collect and generate data for academic work. One cannot consider data as out there and independent of the researcher and what is researched. There is no such thing as data without theory and method. Methods allow one to examine reality and at the same time partially produce the data which is to be examined.

It may not be debatable to claim that some research methods provide better results as compare to other methods (within a certain context) (Stausberg & Engler 2011). In the same light, some academic works make better use of particular methods as compared to others, and nearly all methods have their limitations. However, such limitations do not make methods irrelevant since one cannot conceive academic work without the latter (Stausberg & Engler 2011).

In a formal sense, one can consider research methods as techniques to collect, analyse and enact data in academic research (Law, 2004). While a researcher can improvise their research methods, these techniques or procedures usually follow a plan or a routine. One must not take these techniques for granted or consider them as immutable laws. These procedures only act as examples or guidelines for the establishment of best practices within the academic discourse (Law, 2004).

Stausberg and Engler (2011), explain that how one applies and discuss the underlying principles of these procedures can be termed as its methodology. In other words, methodology refers to the “*technical issues regarding methods*” (p.5) (and include gathering data, sample collection, and analysis) and also include theory and conceptualization of method. Research methodology is the study of how research must be performed. It provides the reason why a particular method is relevant in terms of answering the main research question better than other methods.

Before embarking on what form of research design (qualitative or quantitative) one may use for the research project, it is always viable to first establish a theoretical or methodological framework in mind. Here, it means asking ontological and epistemological questions which frame the main research question in a certain context and make a logical and coherent structure for research design. Therefore, in the subsequent section, the researcher has outlined the research philosophy for this project in terms of how one may view reality including the activities one can use to gain knowledge of that reality in the context of the aim of this study.

5.3 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy can be defined as the nature and development of knowledge, and research background (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). It is about how the researcher views, gather, analyse and use the data to attain valid and reliable knowledge. Prior to informing, how the research is pursued, research philosophy provides the reason why the research is pursued by using a specific method (Gray, 2014). As stated by Gliner and Morgan (2000), Research philosophy can also be explained in terms of the research paradigm. Research paradigm is a set of a belief system which guides the individual in terms of how one behaves in a social context. It provides one the mental framework including a set of values through which one view the environment and makes sense of their relationship with it. One may or may not consciously aware of one's belief system, but it does not mean they lack it. In the context of social research, the paradigm can be described as the theoretical framework, which involves beliefs, perceptions, and understanding of various practices that are used to conduct research (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). One can also take it as a specific procedure that includes steps through which a researcher develops a link between research questions and objectives (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), paradigms can be identified through their ontology (What is the reality?), epistemology (How one may know anything?) and methodology (How one can go

about finding out?). These characteristics create an all-inclusive view of how one views knowledge, how one perceives oneself in relation to knowledge and the methodological strategies one uses to discover it (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In order to understand these concepts more broadly one has to simplify the meaning of these terms.

5.3.1 Ontology

The ontological part of the research paradigm questions the researcher in terms of his/her perception, assumptions and beliefs about reality (Gray, 2014). It focuses on understanding whether reality or the truth is external, meaning that they are governed by extraterritorial sources or is it multiple and depends upon the various interpretation of social actors (Gray, 2014).

There are two extremes in Ontology in the form of objectivism and constructivism. The Objectivist are those who believe that reality or truth is one and exists independent of the social actors (Hamlin, 2015). They regard scientific tests and experiments as the only vehicle through which one can attain the ultimate truth (Hamlin, 2015).

Whereas, Constructivists argue that the reality or the truth is not external and is subjected to human interpretation (Saunders *et al.*, 2003, North, 2016). They contend that reality is the product of the mind and since individuals operate in multiple social contexts they tend to have multiple interpretations of reality (Markula & Silk, 2011 cited in Potrac *et al.* 2014). Unlike the objectivists, there is no such thing as the ultimate reality; therefore, constructivism is “*a perspective that emphasizes how different stakeholders in social settings construct their beliefs*” (Schutt, 2006. p. 44). Shadish (1995), pinpoint that constructionism is not about constructing realities, but it refers to constructing knowledge about different realities of varied people based on their unique experiences.

The main objective of the constructivist research is to understand and reconstruct the beliefs of research participants in order to come to a common understanding. As such findings of the constructivist research are open to new meaning or interpretation as the information increases (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

In this study, the researcher argues that this research project is leaning towards constructivism. The reason behind this is because the main research question of this thesis is to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. As stated by Aslan (2011), religion is a set of a belief system which one has about reality and individual have a different interpretation of religion based on the multifaceted social context. Therefore, one can argue that these British Muslim entrepreneurs although identify themselves as British Muslim, but their interpretation of Islam and its influence on their communication activities are dependent on how subjectively they view their realities (the influence of Islam in their lives). Various academics support this form of reasoning since they argue against the perception of the Muslim community in Europe as heterogeneous instead of homogeneous (Jamal & Sriram, 2015; Jafari, 2012).

Moreover, one can also consider entrepreneurship a socially constructed process (as stated in the previous chapter on entrepreneurship), in which entrepreneurs develop their own knowledge or truth based on the opportunities they see and the social context they live in. Each entrepreneur is different due to their varied background. Hence, one can argue that the influence of their unique local cultural or religious background would have wide-ranging implications on their entrepreneurial and communication activities. The same logic can be applied to minority entrepreneurs since they are from a similar background but their individual construction of the self-set them apart from one and other (for detail discussion go to entrepreneurship chapter).

Once the researcher has identified the existence of multifaceted realities, the subsequent question one may ask is how one can get to know about these realities. The answer to this question lies with the epistemological approach of this research which focuses on the method through which one can collect knowledge about multiple realities of potential research participants.

5.3.2 Epistemology

According to Sinatra (2016), this branch of research philosophy deals with the assumptions about the theory of knowledge and how the researcher attains it. It informs the researcher in terms of what acceptable, and unacceptable knowledge is in a researched discipline and whether one can study the social phenomena in the same way as science (Sinatra, 2016). Epistemology also has two extremes in the form of positivists and interpretivists (Sinatra, 2016). Positivist believes that only such knowledge is acceptable which passes through the five senses. They support the research methods associated with scientific reasoning (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). They believe that the main objective of the theory is to develop a hypothesis which the researcher can test (Deductivisms), and one can attain accurate knowledge by collecting all the factual data that provide the basis for the law (Inductivism) (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). Interpretivists, on the other hand, argue that it is the subjective human mind where the truth or reality lies (Gray, 2014). It is concerned with discerning how individuals make sense of their actions and experiences (Bryman, 2012). In other words, the only method through which one can explore reality is through subjective interaction (Gray, 2014). This form of subjective interaction includes individual biographies, values, and beliefs which they subscribe to (Kelchtermans, 2009). Therefore, researchers following this approach believe that research is an interactive and co-constructed activity and the outcome of it depends upon the personal

interaction between the researcher and the researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Manning (1997), support this argument by adding that the way the researcher frames the questions, observe and comment, influence the answers of the respondents. In the same light, the way respondents answer the questions has an impact on the interpretation, analysis, and discussion of the researcher.

In this study, one can assume that the result of the research topic in the form of a Ph.D. thesis is influenced by the interaction and relationships between the researcher and the researched. It also takes into account the analytical abilities and choices of the research teams (including research supervisors) and their acceptance and non-acceptance of theories which they consciously and sub-consciously use to guide themselves (Markula & Silk 2011; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Hence, the main objective of the research is to consider the participant as the focal point of the whole research process. However, it would be difficult for the researcher to put aside his/her subjective experience in terms of influencing the research (Sparkes, 2012). Thus, accurate knowledge can be obtained as long as the researcher is aware of this influence and use it to achieve validity and reliability in research (Etherington, 2004).

In this context, the researcher is entering into the social world of British Muslim entrepreneurs by adopting an interpretivist approach to gain knowledge. The objective here is to engage with the research participants and collect detail information about whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. However, knowledge through interaction requires one to use a particular philosophical approach before identifying what particular method (in-depth interviews, ethnography) one has to choose to collect data. The required philosophical approach must be able to help the researcher to understand whether religion (Islam) influences the subjective experience of British Muslim entrepreneurs in the context of social media communications. The identification and understanding of the unique subjective experience of the research

participants are critical since it is the experience which formulates individual perception and influence human behaviour (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 2014).

5.3.3 Phenomenological method

Often in research projects related to understanding the influence of religion on human experience researchers often use the phenomenological method. This approach prompts the researcher to get in the shoes of the research participants in order to interactively explore and interpret the outcome of the research (Cope, 2003; Radwan, 2009). Phenomenology is a Greek word where “*Phenomenon*” means appearance and “*logos*” refer to as reason or word (Pivcevic, 1970). Pettit (1969), consider Phenomenology as a study of phenomena or description as one experiences them or as one's experience of things. The main objective of a phenomenological study is to disclose the “*essence of experiences*” (phenomena) and at the same time describing the underlying reasons for such experiences (Pivevic, 1970).

The goal is to persuade the research participant to reconstruct their experience regarding the topic under study (Seidman, 2013), and to collect in depth data from a small population (Radwan, 2009). This is in contrast to giving more value to the large sample size to formulate generalizations (Mukherji & Albon 2012; Howell, 2013). “*The emphasis is thus placed on the production of ‘thick description’ (i.e., rich and highly detailed accounts about what is seen, heard, and felt) and ‘thick interpretation’ (i.e., the analysis of events within a research context*” (Denzin 1989; Howell 2013, cited in Potrac *et al*, 2014. p.34). This often entails researcher to spend considerable time with the research participants while using various qualitative methods such as ethnography or in-depth interviews in order to gain reliable knowledge about the subject's experience (Sparkes 1992; Markula & Silk 2011; Howell 2013). In contrast to the positivist research, where the researcher uses a set of standardized instruments, phemenologists are themselves act as research tools “*to identify, collect and analyse data*” (Ball 1990, p. 157).

This also includes carefully considering and documenting the relationship of the researcher with the research subjects in the field (Howell 2013). It also involves how these relationships may have an impact on the data collection, how one identifies and analyse further data and most importantly the analysis and interpretation of the data collected by the researcher (Mukherji & Albon 2012).

In light of the subjective experience of a researcher, one cannot assume that the reality which the researcher brings forward would be same by another researcher with different life experience (Schutt, 2006). Hence, there are multiple realities in the interpretation of the researcher based on the varied interpretation of both researcher's and participant's unique lived experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Moreover, Phenomenology is also considered a much sought after approach especially when one is attempting to understand how religion affects the lived experiences of its followers (Spickard, 2011. cited in Stausberg & Engler,2013). Phenomenology in a religious study attempts to draw the researcher to understand the religious experience of their research participants. Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1799, cited in Stausberg & Engler, 2013) argued that religion is not just about ideas, but emotional experiences of its followers. For instance, it is the experience of feeling utter dependence that led people to believe in all-powerful, benevolent God. As stated by In James's (1961) "*words, religious Ideas presuppose immediate experiences as their subject matter. They are [. .] consequent Upon religious feeling, not coordinate with it, not independent of what it ascertains*" (p. 424).

Psychologists Amedeo and Giorgi (2003), has developed a phenomenological model through which one can analyse the subjective experience of the research participants in empirical research. Stausberg and Engler (2013), has used this method in order to understand the influence of religion on the lived experience of its followers. The model is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the need of researcher to obtain data from a reasonable number of people regarding their experience. Data collection from multiple sources that are familiar

with a particular experience decrease the chances of personal biases and increase validity in research (Amedeo & Giorgi, 2003). In the second step, the researcher engages in a phenomenological reduction in order to gain access to the subject's lived experience. In other words, the described experience "*are taken exactly as they present themselves [to consciousness] except that [. . .] the claim that what is present [. . .] exists [. . .] is not affirmed*" (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003.p.249). For example, if one is discussing the experience of holding a hot cup of coffee, then one must only imagine the experience the hot cup of coffee has on him and her and not the physical cup.

After the collection of the description of lived experiences, the researcher then analyse them in order to come up with basic structures in relation to that experiences. This process would be difficult since one needs to have an adequate number of interview materials in order to determine which experience is central to the research and which one is idiosyncratic. The researcher has read between the lines in order to identify the pattern that it represents. Some accounts would have less material, and some would have more material related to the research project. There is also a possibility that some accounts may use idiosyncratic language in order to communicate the common structure. It is up to the researcher to identify and decide which part of the information is important and which is idiosyncratic and must gain the ability to justify it in accordance with the collected data. The last step involves re-description of the experience focused on the identified structure to the research participants. The objective is to describe the experience so that the research participant can recognize it without taking into account the interpretation of such experience which the individual has about it. The summarized version of this model is presented in box 5.1.

Box 5.1 four steps in the phenomenological method.

- Locate and interview informants who have shared a particular experience.
- Help your informants focus on exactly how this experience presented itself to their consciousness, leaving aside what they (or you) think was ‘really’ happening.
- Compare and analyse these accounts to identify the basic structures of the experience.
- Redescribe/summarize the experience, boiled down to these basic structures.

Source: Stausberg and Engler (2013).

5.4 Research Design

At present, the researcher has discussed the research philosophy of this research by addressing its ontological, epistemological and phenomenological approach. In the next section, the researcher will examine the research design which includes the explorative nature of this research and what methodological (Qualitative or quantitative) approach is most appropriate to answer the research question.

5.4.1 Data Collection

It is an explorative research study, and it will take a qualitative approach to achieve the research objectives. According to (Brown, 2006), the objective of exploratory research is to conduct initial studies on theoretical or hypothetical ideas. One can conduct exploratory research when one has observed something new and wanted to know more about it. Explorative research is not about providing conclusive answers but to explore the subject from various angles and to tackle new issues on which little or no previous research is done (Brown, 2006).

The reason why the author is using an explorative research method is that British Muslim entrepreneurship and social media marketing are new fields and there is very limited academic data available on it (Smith, 2017; Alserhan, 2011; Sandikci, 2011). In addition, explorative

research is one of the best ways to identify new academic fields since it can lay the groundwork for future academic research and its advancement (Brown, 2006). As stated by Nargundkar (2003), unlike conclusive research, explorative research does not have a rigorous methodology section and its sample size could be smaller due to its explorative nature.

The research design mentioned here is using the inductive approach to conduct this research. In other words, it means that the presentation of the outcome of this research is guided by the literature review presented in this study and the data acquired through participants' in-depth interviews. As stated by Creswell (2012), the qualitative researcher develops their themes, patterns, and categories by using a bottom-up approach and organize "*data into more abstract units of information*" (p.38). This form of inductive process propels the researcher to continuously work with the themes until it results in the formation of a comprehensive set of ideas. It also involves the researcher to interact more with the research participants until they have the opportunity to shape the construction of the themes.

The inductive approach allows the researcher to convert the complex raw data into understandable and straightforward themes and categories through the interpretation made by the researcher (Thomas, 2006). This definition of inductive approach is in line with the description made by Strauss, and Corbin's (1998) "*The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data*" (p. 12). On the other hand, the purpose of the deductive approach is to test whether the collected data is consistent with prior theories, hypotheses, and assumptions as identified by the researcher.

According to Thomas (2006), the main objective of inductive approach is to allow research findings to materialize from the important, dominant or frequent themes which are naturally present in the raw data regardless of limitations enacted by structured methodologies. However, in deductive approach mainly in the context of hypothesis and experimental testing research,

important categories or themes are most of the time left invisible, reframed and obscured due to the presumptions in data collection and analysis process enforced by the researcher.

In deductive analyses, such as those used in experimental and hypothesis testing research, key themes are often obscured, reframed, or left invisible because of the preconceptions in the data collection and data analysis procedures imposed by the researcher (Thomas, 2006). In the context of phenomenological research Smith (2004), suggest the use of the inductive method since it provides flexibility to the researcher in terms of dealing with unanticipated themes or topics to emerge during analysis.

5.4.2 Qualitative Vs. Quantitative

The decision regarding one may use qualitative or quantitative research should not be rest on the personal interest of the researcher or ease of use of the method, but it must follow the logic of one's research philosophy (Taylor & DeVault, 2015). The decision should also be based on the ability of the method to answer the research question (Bryman, 1988).

Qualitative research methods are most commonly used for studies that are conducted at the individual level and focus on gathering comprehensive data on the way people think or feel (Miles & Huberman, 1994, Taylor & DeVault, 2015, Ali, 2013). As stated by Saunders *et al.* (2009), the reason for using a qualitative research methodology is because its strength lies in uncovering more about participant experience. He argues that this research method focuses on in-depth face-to-face interaction with the participants and gives one an opportunity to see the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the respondents. It can be less expensive than quantitative research, which may require large groups of participants or expensive measurement tools. The qualitative research method is also considered appropriate for understanding the influence of religion over society "*since people's beliefs are diverse and multifaceted, aspects that can be hard to catch in quantitative studies.*" (Stausberg & Engler, 2013. p.310).

Berg (2001), pointed out that qualitative research is referred to the characteristics, metaphors, definitions, description of things, symbol and meaning. On the other hand, quantitative research is about measuring of data and counting of things.

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research can be made in terms of the type of questions posed, their analytical objectives, the form of data collection method, the degree of flexibility in research design and type of research data produced (Mack *et al.*, 2005). (See table 1.2). Snape and Spencer (2003), refer to qualitative research as an interpretative/naturalistic approach since it is mainly concerned with the meaning which research participants gives to phenomena within their social environment. They identified key elements of qualitative approach by stating that this research method has the potential to provide an understanding of the research participant's social world. Qualitative research uses a small sample size, highly interactive data collection methods in the form of in-depth interviews and provide an opportunity to explore new concepts and issues.

Previous research work on understanding the influence of religion on human behaviour mostly used qualitative research methods (Stausberg & Engler, 2011). The reason behind it is that it is not easy to measure the influence of religion on human actions due to its subjective nature. One has to go in-depth in order to understand whether and how religious values affect human interaction (Stausberg & Engler, 2011).

Moreover, Stausberg and Engler (2011), state that *“Beyond the sociology and to some extent the psychology of religion, quantitative approaches are currently not very popular among scholars of religion, who appear, as a group, somewhat biased against such approaches”* (p.6). However, one must not wholly disregard the ability of a quantitative method to construct variables to measure concepts. For instance, quantitative research allows one to measure

religiosity. Also, sometimes religious scholars are unable to provide primary quantitative data which would be quite useful for future research (Pitchford *et al.* 2001).

Nevertheless, the quantitative research method tends to examine the relationship between several variables and qualitative methods investigate the meaning which people ascribe to particular social or human phenomena. The main research question in this research is to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. Hence, the researcher will use the qualitative research method as a tool to collect and analyse what individual meanings research participants ascribe to Islam and how this religious phenomenon influences their social media marketing activities.

5.4.3 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are an appropriate way to collect data in qualitative research. It is a form of purposeful interaction through which a researcher attempt to understand what the research participant knows about a particular subject matter, to discover and record what that individual has experienced, what they feel and think about it, and what is the significance of it all for them (Arthur, 2012). In the context of phenomenological research in-depth interviews are better than focus groups. Most of the papers followed interviews used semi-structured format (Brocki & Wearden, 2006).

One can also describe in-depth- interviews as a form of conversation but with a purpose (Arthur, 2012). According to Bremborg (cited in Stausberg & Engler, 2013), interviews are considered a viable method to understand the religious belief and experiences of research participants. It is a kind of conversation which results in the construction of knowledge about the social world through normal interaction (Rorty, 1980).

Kvale (1996), provides two different perspectives on in-depth interviews in the form of '*miner metaphor*,' and '*traveller metaphor*.' The minor metaphor is grounded in the assumption that

knowledge is given and out there and it is the responsibility of the researcher to act as a minor and dig and unearth the valuable knowledge from research participants mind. *“The knowledge is waiting in the subject's interior to be uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of data or meanings out of a subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions.* (Kvale, 1996. p.3)

The second perspective is *'traveller metaphor'* which leans toward the constructivist research model and suggest that knowledge is not given but is constructed and negotiated by both the researcher and the research participant. Here, the interviewer acts as a traveller who journeys with the interviewee throughout the interview process. It is the responsibility of the interviewer to develop the meaning of the interviewee's story and interpret them accordingly.

As the communication between the interviewee and the interviewer develops, both of them works together to reach towards new insights and creates a transformative element to the journey. As further explained by (Kvale, 1996) *"The traveler... asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as 'wandering together with.'* (p. 41).

This form of postmodern conception of attaining knowledge rejects the idea that there is only one form of Metaknowledge that can answer everything (Lyotard, 1984). Instead of knowledge is constructed and attains meaning through the interaction and understanding between the interviewer and the interviewee. Here, the pre-understanding, background and personality of the interviewer are of paramount importance since it acts as decisive factors in terms of construction of knowledge.

The feminist researcher Ann Oakley in 1981 supported the postmodern conception of construction of knowledge and rejected the positivistic epistemological viewpoint that knowledge is given and innate. During her research, she interviewed various women and

concluded that one has to build a relationship with the participants in order to attain quality results as compared to merely asking questions. During the interview sessions, the women participants asked Oakley more questions and seemed more interested in her personality. As recommended in positivist epistemology, she was supposed to respond to their questions since it would create a distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. However, by incorporating her self in the interview session, she was able to win the trust of the participants which resulted in the openness of the latter and the richness of the data obtained.

Meredith McGuire (2008), in her book "*Lived religion*" supported the assertion that one has to follow the constructivist form of qualitative epistemology in interviews to develop rich and nuanced data. She argues that understanding the religious experience of people is a complicated process. However, interviews with the research participants lead the researcher to understand their religious lives which positivist epistemological studies cannot show. She further explains that "*Realizing the complexities of individuals' religious practices, experiences, and expressions, however, has made me extremely doubtful that even mountains of quantitative sociological data (especially data from surveys and other relatively superficial modes of inquiring) can tell us much of any value about individuals' religions*" (McGuire 2008. p. 5).

Therefore, the researcher has used in-depth interviews to answer the main research and objectives due to its potential to disclose in detail individual experiences and their belief system. The questions included in the interview guide (see Appendix 2) are divided into two sections. The first section of the interview guide asks participants about their religious beliefs and how it influences their personal, social and business lives. This part answers the first research objective which seeks to understand Islam as a religion and its teachings on entrepreneurship from participants perspectives. This section has also answered objective six and extended effectuation theory by adding Islamic beliefs and British culture as important factors that influence entrepreneurial actions.

The second section of the interview guide answers research objective 2,3,4,5 by examining participants business in general and their social media communication activities in particular. The findings of this section indicate Islamic beliefs and British culture influence participants social media communication activities and enable them to identify markets and engage customers. These participants utilize Islamic and British networks to resolve their communicational issues by seeking guidance and collaborating with each other for mutual benefit.

5.4.4 Research Participant's selection process

The selection criteria for of the participants was that they consider themselves as British Muslims and use social media for marketing purposes. The reason behind it is that entrepreneur's life experiences and identity have the potential to influence their business (Gilmore & Carson, 2000). In order to recruit British Muslim entrepreneurs to participate in this study, the researcher attended ethnic business events, marketing seminars (e.g., Muslim lifestyle Expo, Muslim food festival, London Muslim Lifestyle Show) and the utilization of the internet. 19 participants were recruited from these events, and seven were recruited through their social media networks. Once the target audience is identified the researcher provided them with information regarding the research and requested them to participate in this project.

The sample consisted of 12 males and 14 females' entrepreneurs. The saturation point for the male participants was 9 (but the researcher recruited two more to check if there is any new theme emerging) since most of them were from the online retail sector and providing the similar answers in terms of their personal beliefs and business activities. However, women participants in this research came from diverse backgrounds and are more active on social media as compare to the male counterparts that led the researcher to recruit more of them as compared to male

participants. Nevertheless, the saturation point for women participants was 12 but the researcher further recruited two more to see if there is any new theme emerging.

Out of the 26 interviewees; three were health consultants, four were business and lifestyle consultants, 17 were manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, and two digital app developers (Further details about participants in terms of their gender, location, and nature of business are presented in table 5.1). 15 of the interviews took place at the business premises, and 11 were in the cafes as per the convenience of the participants. All of the interviews were audio recorded and safely secured in the password protected computer only accessible by both of the researchers. Participants also signed a consent form which further protected their anonymity and ensured them that their data would only be used in academic conferences and writing research papers.

It took eight months to conduct the interviews between August 2016 and April 2017. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed, and the transcriptions were analysed using Nvivo. The researchers also drew the data through field notes from participant observation and reflexive journals entries. The compilation of the filed notes increased the trustworthiness of the data and provided a benchmark against which analysis of data and its interpretation can be tested for adequacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Halpren, 1983).

5.4.5.1 Memoing

Another important source the researcher has used to collect data is Memoing which is considered as a valuable tool to conduct qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1984). It is the researcher's field notes recording that would allow him/her to think, sees, hear and reflect on the process (Groenewald, 2004). It is quite easy for a researcher to get absorbed in the data collection process and may not be able to do justice with the accumulated data. Memoing

enables them to organized their thoughts and helps them see the clear picture through self-reflection. Nevertheless, it is very crucial for the researcher to differentiate between reflective and descriptive notes in the form of feelings, hunches and impression and so on. One should date the memoing (field notes) in order to for one to correlate it with data later on (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

5.4.5.2 Field notes

Field notes are considered as an important data collection method in qualitative research. Since the human mind cannot keep a full record of everything in mind, field notes allow the researcher to retain and process gathered data (Lofland & Lofland, 1999). In other words, it means that the researcher must be able to record in the field notes all those important points which are said in the interview without personal evaluation and judgment as comprehensively as possible. For example, what and who was involved? What and where the activity occurred? Moreover, *"field notes should be written no later than the morning after."* Besides discipline, *field notes also involve luck, feelings, timing, whimsy and art*" (Bailey, 1996, p. xiii).

At this stage, it is important to understand that field notes can not only use as a data collection method but also data analysis technique (Morgan, 1997). Since field notes include interpretation of data by the researcher they are communicating, *"Part of the analysis rather than the data collection"* (Morgan, 1997, pp. 57-58). However, one has to keep in mind that the "basic datum of phenomenology is the conscious human being", or the lived experiences of the participants in the research (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 98; Heron, 1996), it is quite important that the researcher should do everything in his/her to prevent premature categorization of the data involved (Caelli, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Field notes allow the researcher to clarify each interview settings and get closer to actual lived experiences of the participants.

5.4.6 Sampling process

Population sampling for the intended study is based on purposive sampling and involves convenience and snowball methods as major analytical tools to conduct this study. As stated above, the researcher has selected 26 entrepreneurs for this particular research topic since this number is considered appropriate for qualitative research projects (Guest *et al.*, 2006). Also, the researcher has limited his interviews to England as the majority of the Muslim population in the UK reside in the north-west (mainly Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford, and London) (Office of National Statistics, 2011).

13 of these participants are males, and the 13 are females and have their independent businesses. It is the intention of the researcher to recruit participants from both genders equally. The ages of the participants range from 19 to 46 with two participants in their mid 40's. Among these participants, two of them have their own offices while the rest operates from home. Majority of the participants are in the initial years of their business (average four years). 16 out of 26 participants are married in their ethnicity and have 1 to three children respectively while the rest of them are single and currently living with their parents. All of these participants are first, second and third generation born British Muslims and consider themselves as practicing Muslims. The name of these participants due to confidentiality agreement signed will remain confidential. Nevertheless, the researcher will refer to them in the following section as RM1 (Respondent Male 1), RF2 (Respondent Female 2) and onwards. Further details about participants in terms of their gender, location, and nature of business are presented in table 5.1 below.

No	Research Participants Male and Female (RM & RF)	Gender	Location	Ethnicity	Nature of Business
1	RF1	Female	Bradford	British Indian	Dietitian
2	RF2	Female	Manchester	British Pakistani	Herbal lifestyle coach
3	RF3	Female	London	British Pakistani	Artificial Jewellery manufacturer and supplier
4	RM4	Male	Manchester	British Indian	Wholesale (General cloths) supplier
5	RM5	Male	London	British Pakistani	Halal food manufacturer
6	RM6	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	Halal meal prep company focussing bodybuilders
7	RF7	Female	Manchester	British African	Audiologist
8	RF8	Female	Coventry	British Pakistani	Marketing consultant

9	RF9	Female	Birmingham	British Pakistani	Entrepreneurial consultant
10	RM10	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	Hookah Supplier
11	RM11	Male	Birmingham	British Pakistani	Online Halal food delivery service
12	RF12	Female	Manchester	British Pakistani	App developer
13	RM13	Male	Oldham	British Banglades hi	Digital platform provider
14	RF14	Female	Birmingham	British Pakistani	Islamic toy store supplier
15	RM15	Male	Birmingham	British Pakistani	Islamic greeting cards manufacturer and supplier
16	RF16	Female	London	British Pakistani	TV presenter and lifestyle coach
17	RF17	Female	Birmingham	British Pakistani	Marketing and Branding consultant

18	RM18	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	Camel Milk supplier
19	RM19	Male	Manchester	British <i>Iraqi</i>	eBay Seller B(Women Cloths)
20	RF20	Female	Birmingham	British Banglades hi	Amazon Seller (Kitchen accessories)
21	RF21	Female	Birmingham	British Banglades hi	Amazon Seller (Sportswear)
22	RF22	Female	London	British Pakistani	Motivational speaker
23	RM23	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	eBay seller A (Horsewear)
24	RM24	Male	Manchester	British Banglades hi	Takeaway
25	RM25	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	Coffeehouse
26	RM26	Male	Manchester	British Pakistani	eBay seller (women shoes)

Table 5.1: Research participant's demographics

Researchers conducting Phenomenological research normally use purposive sampling since the small sample size can offer a satisfactory perspective if given Sufficient contextualisation (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Goulding, 2005). There is no right sample size in phenomenological research (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Small sample size has the potential to provide the essence of experiences since large sample size result in “*potentially subtle inflections of meaning*” (Collins & Nicolson, 2002. p.626). Also, there is a growing consensus related to the use of small sample size when conducting phenomenological research (Smith, 2004; Reid *et al.*, 2005). In the next section, the researcher will discuss the ethical consideration for this study including the participant's consent form and privacy.

5.4.7 Ethical Consideration

5.4.7.1 Research participant’s consent form and data protection

The purpose of the informed consent form (see Appendix 1, page 326-327) for this research project is to inform the research participant about the scope of the research, how long the study takes, and what will be their role in the research. It will also assure them that the data they provide would not be used against them; that their personal information (name, telephone numbers, and addresses) will remain confidential and only be employed for academic purposes and with their permission.

The consent form has allowed the *University of Salford*, including supervisors, to be aware and monitor the data collection activities during the fieldwork phase. Once the research participants understand the project and their role in the research, only then they will be able to make an informed decision about their involvement in the research.

The format of the consent form is clear and written in easy to understand conversational language. The participants are given at least 24 hours' notice to consider his/her involvement in the research project. The researcher also informs them about who will see their data and why

and who will be involved in the data collection with the researcher (native language translators or audio transcribers).

The consent form that the researcher has designed includes the exit strategy for the participant. For example, if the research participants after providing data feel that he/she are not willing to disclose any part of or the entire set of information they have provided to the researcher, then they have a right to leave this study and the data provided by them will be deleted from the records.

Moreover, the researcher has made sure that the personal information of the research participants (names and contact details) will remain confidential and anonymous and stored in a password-protected laptop/desktop accessed only by the researcher. The data (interviews, recordings, questionnaires, and transcripts) collected has been coded and remains anonymous. The physical copies of the data are locked in a safe place accessed only by the researcher.

The data is published in a way so that it disguises the identity of research participants. The data is not used in any way that could identify the research participant unless the research participants have allowed the researcher to disclose any personal information to the public. The collected data has and will remain stored for three years after the award of the degree, to verify the data by the external sources or to use it for further research. The researcher is fully committed to the ethical regulations of the *University of Salford* relating to the procedures of data collection, use, analysis, and protection.

The researcher has audio-tapped the entire interviews with the consent of the research participants and makes sure that the collected information does not pass on to the third party without prior approval from the interviewee (Arkley & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996). As stated before, the researcher has also assign code and number to each interviewee for example "Research Male (RM1) or Research Female (RF1)." The researcher has also labelled each

recording and assigned a particular interview code. Once the interview is finished, the researcher has listened to the recording and make the necessary notes. The researcher has also transcribed main statements, words, and phrases to allow the voices of research participants to be heard.

5.5 Research Analysis

Data analysis for this research project is based on the thematic analysis. As stated by Clarke and Braun, (2014), thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify, organize and provide key insights about the pattern of meaning (themes) across the dataset. By focusing on the pattern of meanings in the data set, thematic analysis offers the researcher an opportunity to make sense of the given data and experiences in qualitative transcripts.

Braun and Clark (2019), state that the objective of thematic analysis is not only to find what is common, meaningful or important. This method also informs the researcher whether the commonalities or important bits of information found in the data-set are relevant to the topic and are they able to answer the main research questions being explored.

They further, add that thematic analysis is considered a flexible method since it enables the researcher to focus on the data in various ways. For instance, the researcher can use thematic analysis to examine meanings across the data-set or they can analyse a single aspect of phenomena or pattern in detail. The researchers can also report the systematic or obvious meaning from the data or they can further indulge in the latent meanings of the data that focuses on the assumptions or what is lying behind a specific meaning or pattern. The various forms of thematic analysis can take makes it a favourable choice for researchers to answer a variety of qualitative research topics and questions (Braun & Clark, 2019).

Another reason for selecting thematic analysis is its accessibility. Specifically, thematic the analysis allows early career researchers a systematic way to carry out research that otherwise can seem conceptually challenging, vague and puzzling and overly complex. It offers a way in qualitative research which enable the researchers to understand the basic process of coding and examining qualitative data in an orderly way and help them explore how they use that data to develop an understanding of conceptual and theoretical issues within their research.

Thematic analysis can be viewed as a viable option since it does not require prior understanding of complex theoretical perspectives (Braun & Clark, 2019). For instance, to conduct descriptive analysis, the researcher must have familiar with the complicated theoretical perspectives around language. Knowing this information is crucial for the researcher to conduct descriptive analysis since it has a direct impact on the way the researcher view, code, analyze and makes claims about the data. On the other hand, thematic analysis is only a method instead of being an approach to carry out qualitative research. One can see its key point against other research methods since it ensures the accessibility and flexibility of the analytical approach (Braun & Clark, 2019).

During research analysis phase, the researcher has also used a bottom-up approach (inductive as previously stated) which is driven by what is mentioned in the transcript dataset. In other words, codes and themes are generated from the content of the data itself so that what is mapped by the researcher during the analysis part is in accordance or closely matches with the content of the data.

The first stage of research analysis involved closely listening to the audio recordings of the interviews and going through the transcripts to understand participants. This exercise has allowed the researcher to immerse in the data, recall the interview atmosphere and the settings in which it took place. The listening of the recording and reading of the transcripts has enabled

the researcher to gain new insights. At this stage, the researcher has also made notes about his reflections regarding the fieldwork experience including thoughts and observations of potential significance from the fieldwork notes and memos. The researcher has also paid attention to the content of the transcripts (what has been discussed), language (e.g., symbols, metaphors, repetitions, pauses) and the context including the initial interpretative comments (Groenewald, 2004).

The second stage of the analysis is to generate codes. The researcher has gone through the data (interview transcripts) to identify and highlight significant statements, quotes, and sentences that have the potential to provide insight which was relevant to the data-set. Here, the researcher did not limit himself to descriptive coding but also use interpretive coding style to identify key insights (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

In the next step, the researcher has developed a cluster of meanings from these important sentences or codes and converted them into themes. This phase allows the researcher to review the coded data and identify areas of overlap and similarity between codes. This process also includes clustering or collapsing codes that seem to share similar features. In this way, these codes reflected and described a logical and meaningful form in the data-set.

During this stage the researcher has also attempted to look for a connection between the emerging themes, assembling them based on conceptual similarities, and assigning each theme with a descriptive label. During this process, some of the themes were dropped as they were not in line with the emerging structure and because they did not have any strong evidence base.

Jarman, Smith, and Walsh (1997) pinpointed that researchers who are using thematic approach must be careful in terms of generating an accurate list of themes emerging from the transcribed data. In other words, themes are not only identified based on prevalence but also immediacy and articulacy through which the transcripts highlight themes. For example, how eloquently

one put the themes (using minimum words to describe the theme) as compare to other participants. One must also examine the way themes help in the clarification of other aspects of account are also significant considerations (Smith et al., 1999). For instance, if self-identity has emerged as a theme, then this might help in understanding the participant's relationship with others. It is the responsibility of the research to be careful in terms of influencing one's own beliefs on the selection and interoperation of themes.

After the emergence of the themes, the researcher has summarized those themes in order to gain a holistic context. As stated by Ellenberger: *"Whatever the method used for analysis the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject. Each individual has his way of experiencing temporality, spatiality, materiality, but each of these coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner 'world.'* (As cited in Hycner, 1999, pp. 153-154).

At this stage, the researcher has conducted a validity test by taking the individual interviewee summaries (themes) back to the interviewee and make sure that the data obtained is in accordance with the lived world of the participants (Hycner, 1999).

5.5.1 Reliability and Validity

Qualitative research is a kind of research that the researchers use when they are not able to obtain relevant findings by using quantitative or statistical approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Although one can quantify the collected data in qualitative research, the bulk of the analysis is always interpretive and can results in different meaning for different individuals. Therefore, it can become a bit problematic for qualitative researchers to come to the same conclusion. Since one of the most important issue in qualitative reteach is to arrive at a shared conclusion, it makes it difficult for qualitative researchers to ensure trustworthiness and quality.

It would be easy to hope that the findings of the qualitative research are so convincing and persuasive in their own right that they do not require any form of further validation (Kvale, 1996). In reality, it is not easy for qualitative researchers to defend the criteria for research evaluation, especially when academics regard their findings as for individual claims supported by unscientific methods (Ballinger, 2006). The qualitative researcher needs to show the integrity and value of their research by developing criteria for substantial research evaluation that support the reliability and validity of their research. They must also check if the qualitative evaluation criteria are different from quantitative research, and decide what those evaluation standards should be. Otherwise, it would be difficult for qualitative researchers to convince sceptical academic audiences (Mandel, 2018).

DeVellis, (2003), argue that there is a difference between quantitative and qualitative research within the context of reliability. He points out that reliability is usually determined by internal consistency and homogeneity of items (DeVellis, 2003). This shows that reliability is more focused on the consistency of the means of data collection which is mostly irrelevant when it comes to qualitative research. Since the main objective of the qualitative research is to collect and analyse the responses of the participants at a particular space, time and context, instead of looking for the consistency in their answers. In addition, in contrary to reliability, qualitative research cannot always exactly replicated. The responses obtained from a particular interview depend upon the researcher unique approach, mindset and assumptions including their interaction with the research participants. On the other hand, validity is referred to whether the research can truthfully and accurately measure what it supposed to measure and nothing else.

In a landmark study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed a specific criterion for qualitative research that includes reliability, objectivity and internal and external validity. They explained these criteria in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. They further state that credibility refers to truth or believability in the research findings. For instance,

participants might be given interview transcripts and asked to confirm or disconfirm what they have stated in it. This form of check attempts to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. One can also achieve credibility through triangulation of the data and persistent observation during the interview process. This form of credibility allows the researcher to ensure the internal validity of the research findings. One can also further build credibility by spending more time in the field and by reflexive observation including taking notes.

Transferability refers to the ability of the researcher to apply the findings to other context or settings. This form of external validity acts as a check for the findings. In qualitative reach, researchers also provide a detail description of the context in which the findings are generated. They do it to give readers enough information to judge the applicability of the results to other contexts. Dependability refers to the notion that whether there is any consistency among the various interviews obtained by the researcher. Since one cannot generate consistency in a qualitative study, therefore, one can obtain dependability by having appropriate documentation of the data collected, approaches, and undertaking proper decisions about the study.

Conformity refers to the idea that whether the researcher was objective during data collection and data analysis. The research must show the research findings to two or more independent researchers regarding the accuracy, relevancy, and meaning of the data (Polit and Beck, 2012). Since conformity indicates as a mean to project research quality, therefore, the researcher should also emphasise the use of methodology to create conformability (Mandel, 2018).

In this study, the researcher has used various techniques to reconfirm the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of this research. Some of the following criteria are as follow,

- The researcher has accounted for personal bias by bracketing oneself consciously to understand the phenomena from the perspective of the participants that is “the focus [was] on an insider perspective” (Mouton & Marais, 1990, p. 70).
- The audio taping of the interview and the bracketing of the researcher in the transcription process further contribute to the truth.
- Consciously comparing and seeking out parallels and differences across accounts to confirm that alternative viewpoints are equally represented.
- The researcher has also included rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants in the finding section to support research credibility.
- After the interview, the researcher has handed over the transcription and a detailed summary of the interview to the research participants in order to validate that the data obtained reflect their perspective regarding the phenomena experienced.

In addition, the researcher has used NVIVO software to organize, analyse and code data. As stated by Hilal and Alabri, (2013), researchers are increasingly using NVivo software to improve the quality of subjective analysis. The software enables the researcher to minimize time to conduct manual task and provide them the opportunity to have more time to identify tendencies, recognize themes and come to realistic conclusions. Moreover, this particular software allows the researcher the ability to, querying, managing, modelling and reporting data and makes it easier to perform a time-consuming and vague task as compared to Manuel analysis.

5.6 Key propositions developed in literature review

This section discusses the development of key propositions arising from the literature review.

Literature review	Secondary Codes	Primary Codes
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple interpretation of religion. • Religious beliefs, and values guide human action. • Religion create solidarity and stability in society. • Religion infuses ethical and moral values among people, • Religious values provide work guidance. • Spiritual wellbeing positively affects individual and organizational growth. • Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism focuses on the development of individual moral and ethical character. • Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism promote work in accordance with ethical and moral principles. • Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism promote work for both individual and societal spiritual and material wellbeing. • Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism support pursuit of material well-being but 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion encourage individual to work for individual and societal benefit by providing ethical and moral framework to conduct business activities.

	<p>while creating a balance between materialism and spiritual wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism propose that work makes individual closer to God. • Growth of religion due to, globalization, economic uncertainty, job insecurity and technological change. • Spiritual capital decrease business cost. 	
Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneur as a central figure. • Entrepreneur as innovator. • Entrepreneur as a risk taker. • Entrepreneur is alert and ready to anticipate market inefficiencies and convert it into profit-making opportunities. • Entrepreneurial characteristics are not enough, one must identify, evaluate and utilized business opportunities. • Culture traits such as individualism and family values influence entrepreneurial actions. • Religious networks provide business networking opportunities. • Similar ethnicity influence entrepreneurial actions. • Islam influence entrepreneurial actions. • Identification of market based on ethnicity and religion (enclave economy). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial characteristics influence business actions. • Social institutions (e.g. culture, ethnicity and religion) influence entrepreneurial actions. • Starting from ethnic and religious markets then Breaking out into mainstream market. • Ethnic entrepreneurs are limited to specific industries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of market based on mainstream population (middlemen theory). • Ethnic businesses include transportation, takeaways/restaurants, accountancy, IT firms, online retail sector. 	
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneur as central figure. • Entrepreneur as flexible & innovative. • Entrepreneurial marketing is a haphazard process. • Market identification based on ethnicity and mainstream population. • Focus on transactional and relationship marketing. • Difference between immigrant and 1st and 2nd generation marketing activities. • lack of market research • lack of use of technology for marketing. • Growing role of digital media in ethnic marketing. • Use of ethnic and family connections to create brand awareness on social media platforms. • Use of social media networks based on similar professional experiences. • Functional and emotional Content marketing to engage customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial marketing. • Ethnic marketing • Islamic marketing • Social media networking and content marketing.

Table 5.1: Developing key codes

5.7 Summary

At present, the researcher has established the research philosophy of this study as Constructivist since the participants' interpretation of religious experience (reality) is multifaceted and based on their unique experiences. Therefore, the most appropriate way for the researcher to gain an understanding of participants' religious experiences is through interaction (Interpretivist approach). Phenomenological method is selected due to the subjective nature of the main research question that is focused on exploring whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs.

It is an explorative study, utilized purposeful, and snowball sampling as a major tool to collect data. Once the participants are selected, they are requested to take part in the in-depth interview sessions while keeping in mind their rights as research participants. The sample size of this study is 26 as it is an appropriate number in thematic research studies and the fact that theoretical saturation was reached at this stage. The data was stored in audio tapes, and field notes and the researcher has analysed them by using thematic analysis method. The audiotaping of the interviews, transcriptions, phenomenological bracketing of the researcher (both in interview and post-interview phase) and reporting and confirming the result of the interviews with the interviewees has determined the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of this study.

Chapter 6 Findings

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the in-depth-interviews carried out by the researcher. The findings of this research has revealed four overarching themes that explain how Islamic belief influenced the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. The first theme of this section has explored Islam as a religion and its teachings on entrepreneurship. The second theme discusses the communication activities of participants through social media networks. The third theme analyse whether there is any relationship between Islamic beliefs and the social media communication activities of the participants. The fourth theme looks into the social media communication issues faced by the participants and their use of social media networks to resolve it.

6.2 Being British Muslim

During the fieldwork, the researcher has explored Islam as a religion and its influence on the participants. The findings indicate that the participants identify themselves as British Muslims and conduct day-to-day activities in accordance with Islamic beliefs system and British culture.

Figure 6.1 summarize Being British Muslim theme.

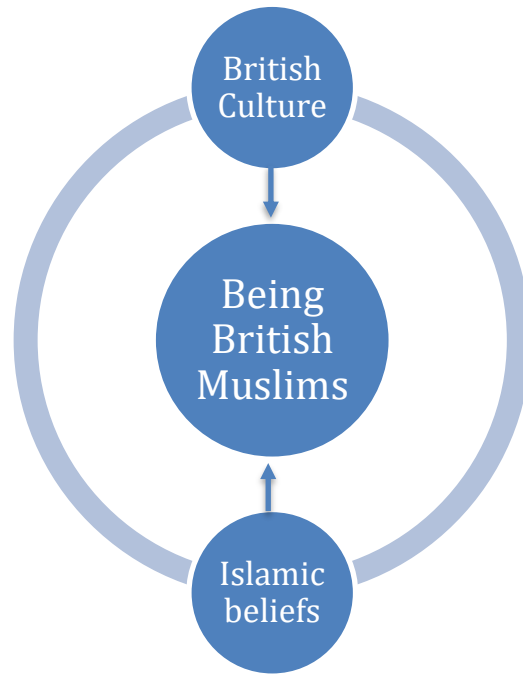


Figure 6.1: shows the influence of Islamic beliefs and British culture on participants sense of who they are.

“Being British is my identity and Islam is my religion”

(RF8, Entrepreneurial consultant).

6.2.1 Influence of Islam and British culture

Islam as a way of life

During the interviews the participants concurrently use the words *Islam* and being *Muslim* to define themselves and their business practices. Majority of the participants regarded Islam not just a religion but also a way of life. They state that Islam provides them with personal connection with the higher power, a sense of meaning about life and their place in it. The belief in God and their individual commitment to follow ethical and moral values mentioned in *Quran* enables them to contribute positively to their community in general and business in particular. For these participants faith in the unknown deepens their belief in themselves that comes handy when dealing with their daily life and business issues.

“Islam is a way of life. I don’t think it can be explained and I think people have very different concepts of Islam, I think Islam is your own connection that you feel that something that is greater than you, something that can control every aspect of your life that you can turn to when you need” **(RM6, Halal meal prep company).**

“Islam teaches you to be humble, be calm in any situation...violence is not an answer. Muhammad teaches us that we should even respect the enemy (competitors)” **(RM24, Takeaway owner).**

“(Islam is) Faith in yourself, faith in the unknown” **(RF22, Motivational speaker).**

The above-mentioned findings reveal an interesting point of view that emphasizes belief system rather than ritual. These participants state that Islam is a way of life that contains universal values of ethics and morality and it is their responsibility as Muslims to practice these

values for both personal, social and professional development. The participants did not discuss rituals to describe Islam such as praying five times a day or fasting in a month of Ramadan. However, it does not mean that the practice of rituals is absent among these participants. On the contrary, they believe that mere following of rituals is not enough one must be able to understand the logic behind these rituals that promotes good actions rather than mere words. As one of the participant puts it,

“My role model is my prophet Muhammad because he taught us to stand up for what is right and prove it through actions because actions speaks louder than words. So for me, this is the time to prove my words by my actions as a Muslim” (RM23, EBay seller A).

As stated by the participants, one can draw a conclusion that Islam is all about believing in God and following universal ethical and moral values for personal and societal success. The depiction of Islam as humane, love, respect and fairness suggest a practical attribute of religion that provides these participants with guidance and encourage them to cooperate with each other in every aspect of life including business in order to create a fair and responsible society.

As stated above, the teachings of Islam are not limited to participant’s personal life but extend into their business activities. These participants differentiate themselves from the mainstream entrepreneurs within the context of business. The differences normally relates to ethics and morality and religious rules that the participants believe they have to follow unlike their mainstream counterparts.

“Yeah, there are a few restraints as a Muslim because you are selling clothes which are sexy too but you cannot picture them like that (Islamic value of modesty)” (RM19, EBay Seller B).

“They (mainstream entrepreneurs) can make money by all means. Whereas I would look for the ways that Allah has allowed. The difference is that I’d be honest and polite to my customers. So, no you don't run over others to make money. You have to keep ethical

boundaries and rules that Islam has on how to be with the customers. I say always keep humble. So my motive is be humble to the customer and not just make the money out of it”

(RF8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

“Non-Muslims are more aggressive. They are ready to take risks but the Muslims can't do in that area because they do not want to take loans and pay interests etc. They (Muslims) have to plan before they do it because they need to raise money and so they pretty much have to go solo. They have to figure out to raise up funds to be able to start on their own. Whereas non-Muslim space have no problem going to other people (Banks)” **(RF9, Marketing**

Consultant).

“We have sound principles of ethical business dealings. We have this thing, 'halal' and 'haram' and we deal over those principles and we know that they (mainstream entrepreneurs) do different levels of marketing and some of them are the grey areas where as Muslims we cannot go” **(RF9, Marketing consultant).**

These excerpts might project a negative outlook of mainstream entrepreneurs but there are some participants, who have something positive to add about them,

“When I first started, I started to go in business seminars and I read books that they (mainstream entrepreneurs) gave us, I listened to many (non-Muslim) speakers there. I found Islam in them. The entrepreneurs who are not Muslims or even Asians had the same traits that Islam teaches us. I think, what makes a Muslim entrepreneur different from a non-Muslim is that they do the business in right way. They do it with faith and that is what makes them much stronger. Because you follow Deen (religion) with faith and it reflects in your business then it makes you stronger. So, you get the religious education. How to be good to people and get success training then you will be much more powerful than any other” **(RF2,**

Herbal lifestyle coach).

The influence of Islam on participant's business activities has emerged as a main theme, which guide their professional dealings. The participants believe that their business is different from the mainstream business, as they have to abide by the Islamic rulings that prohibit interest and sell only those products and services permitted in Islam. The participants also believe that they have to setup ethical and moral standards in their business dealings with customers and consider it as one of the factors that differentiate them from the mainstream businesses. The participants also differentiated themselves due to their minority status as British Muslim which restrict them to go to the banks and raise necessary funds. However, the participants also said that some of the mainstream business have faith in themselves and they follow ethics and morality in their business activities which they believe derived from their British values.

British culture

During the field work British culture and values has also emerged as a recurring sub-theme. The participants on many occasion have talked about British culture and values in the form of local consumer culture and ethics and morality that influence their business activities. They believe that understanding British culture and values gives them a competitive edge in the market as compare to their immigrant parents. They also believe that there is no difference between British and Muslim values as both comprises of humanistic values.

“I think because I am essentially brought up in this culture (British) since a very young age, I understand the customers better. I know what they like and dislike. What frustrates them and makes them unhappy. What they like to eat and what music should be played in store etc.so it is easier for me to connect to them rather than my parents who do not have the British accent and were not essentially brought up in the culture here” (RM25, Coffee House owner).

“What are British values? The values that we follow here and the laws that we obey here are humanity value and these have been in Islam for long. You cannot really distinguish on the basis of nationality. It is the media that has created a difference other than that I do not think that "British" values are very different than Islamic values” **(RM15, Islamic greeting cards manufacturer and supplier).**

“(British values) are Freedom of speech, freedom of soul, freedom of action, nowadays it's a big thing for Muslims. Basically everybody is entitled to their own opinion everybody. Being a human, you should be entitled to your opinion and that has an impact on your business”

(RM23, EBay EBay seller A).

These excerpts disclose interesting results that suggest that the participants find no difference between Islam and the British values when it comes to ethic and morality in both personal and business context. The participants consider Islam as foundation that provides them with a reason for their existence and how they must conduct their business dealings. While various freedoms associated with British values such as freedom of speech, freedom to think, freedom of action, humanism and empathy influence their business dealings. At the same time, participant's cultural upbringing in the British society has made it easier for them to identify and engage with customers better than their parental generation. The various freedoms associated with British values provide them the opportunity to think out of the box and make innovative business decisions in accordance with their local market dynamics. Therefore, one could argue that the integration of Islamic belief and British cultural values has influenced their day-to-day lifestyle including business activities and allow them to carve their own space with in modern British society as British Muslims entrepreneurs.

In addition, some of the participants differentiate their entrepreneurial practices from businesses in Muslim majority countries and hence reaffirm their unique British Muslim entrepreneurial style.

“They are different in term of thinking. British Muslims (entrepreneurs) are very simple, straight forward, people with no hidden agendas. I am not stereotyping anyone but it is coming from my experience with them. We are more open and easy going and simple people”

(RF2, Herbal lifestyle coach).

Another participant believed that the right of religious practice in UK (British value) makes her business more religiously attuned as compare to the businesses in Muslim majority countries.

“I have been brought up in Pakistan and I have been brought up in the UK and I know there is a huge difference in a people (customers) in Pakistan and a people (customers) in the UK.

As we grow up here in the UK, we get closer to the religion” **(RF14, Islamic toy store supplier).**

When asked to explain her statement she said,

“Yes! We do because we realise that we are living in a place where religion plays an important part in your life. You are close with British values and lifestyle and you know what is harmful and what’s good. When you reach a certain age you get closer to religion as compared to people who are already living in Islamic countries. Like when it’s easy to get halal food people get used to it and they become a bit careless whereas, when they know they are in a different set up(living in a Muslim minority country), they get cautious and alert in this way” **(RF14, Islamic toy store supplier).**

This is an interesting point and reflect the ability of the research participants to identify and take advantage of the ethnic customers markets in the UK because of their religion. These differences mentioned above portray how these research participants experience their businesses in relation with others that include there parent generation, businesses in Muslim majority countries, and the mainstream local business. The participants focus on ethics and morality based on British Muslim values that provide them with a guideline and a mechanism to conduct their business operations.

The participants believe that success in business is all about having faith in God and following the ethical and moral standards set in Islam and British cultural values regardless of any challenges. Therefore, the conscious choice of integrating religious principals with British values into everyday business activities is what they feel also makes them different from the mainstream businesses and bring about their unique identity as British Muslim entrepreneurs.

At present, the researcher has discussed the role of Islamic beliefs and British cultural values on participants business in general. In the next section, the researcher will specifically examine how participant's Islamic belief and British cultural values strengthen their entrepreneurial competitiveness within the context of market identification and consumer segmentation.

6.3 Being British Muslim entrepreneur

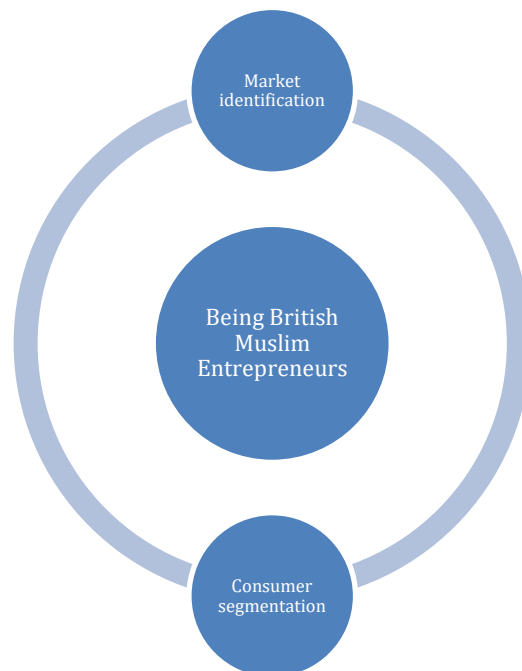


Figure 6.2: British Muslim entrepreneurs theme

6.3.1 Market Identification

Majority of the participants believe that their market competitiveness lies in their ability to identify unique market opportunities and create niche markets for their products and services. Figure 6.2 indicate this main theme and how it further divided into market identification and consumer segmentation sub-themes. The participants interviewed have stated that they started their business due to their ability to identify niche markets based on their personal interests, education, and skill set, ability to identify opportunity through common ethnic, communal and religious experiences.

“I was a driving instructor back then, it was my profession. I had to lose weight so i used their (franchise) products as a customer and I got very good results. People around me noticed and they wanted the product so that gave me a vision that I can help the community

by bringing back the health. All that inspired me to start my company”. **(RF2, Herbal lifestyle coach).**

*“Obviously, my educational background is the reason. I have studied audiology and I think I am good enough to advice people on ears, so I thought, why not work with my expertise”***(RF7, Audiologist).**

“I have halal dietary requirements...I've visited super markets and I've seen food that looked amazing and I wished I could eat it but I could not because it was not halal. So, I took it for myself. I am an entrepreneur and my role is to identify a problem and find a solution for it. I am embarking the journey to create (Halal) food options that I have always desired to eat that were missing from my diet” **(RM5, Halal food manufacturer).**

“We can do other business but women shoes have chance of selling better because the percentage of population of women is greater than that of men. So, it's high chance of getting more customer. Women tend to keep up with fashion, if they do not like one design they will immediately jump to another one that works for them and we have some previous experience too from eBay and amazon as well” **(RM26, EBay seller C).**

The comments of the participants mentioned above suggest that their selection of the business depended upon their own personal and professional experiences and a desire to help their community. Therefore, a weight loss herbal coach started her business due to her personal history of struggling with overweight. She considers healthy women who look after their diet are happier than other women are and have the potential to play an important role in the betterment of the entire family. On the other hand, the audiologist and a ready to eat *halal* meat distributor are targeting NHS patients and British Muslim consumers respectively. They feel

that by using their education and religious obligations (of finding halal meat products) they will be able to provide customize solutions to their target audiences. However, eBay shoes seller identified women as his primary target market by using prior customer insights (women love for shoes) and professional experiences as the main reason the start this particular business.

6.3.2 Consumer Segmentation

This section explores how the research participants perform consumer segmentation. The result of the findings indicated that there are four different through which the participants are segmenting their target markets. The first category includes those participants who claim to target everyone and customized their products in accordance with various market segmentations. Then there are participants who cater to ethnic markets including Muslims. However, the third group only caters to the Muslim market and the fourth one has targeting health conscious and lifestyle market. Figure 6.3 shows the various target markets identified by the participants and the rationale behind this form of consumer segmentations.

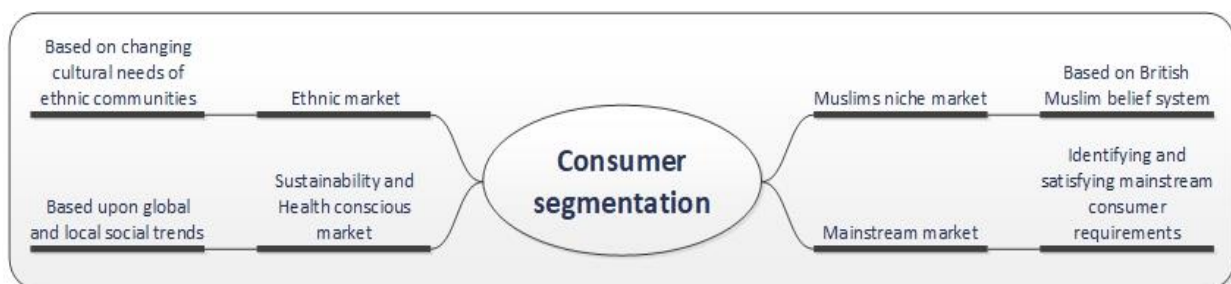


Figure 6.3: Consumer segmentation (How Participants segment their consumers)

Mainstream market

Seven out of twenty-five participants said that they do not consider dividing their markets based on modern day marketing lingos such as demographics and psychographics. They believe that there products and services is for everyone and focusing on one particular group may result in loss of sales in the other markets. However, they still use market segmentation based on demographics and psychographics similar to mainstream business. Majority of these participants have businesses in the internet retail market (eBay sellers) and food industry and sell generalist products (companies that market and sell different and completely, unrelated products under one brand name. e.g. Women cloths) to cater the mainstream population.

“I basically sell all around the world so they (customers) are from everywhere. Basically I cater with the basics, all plain so everyone buys it” (RF19, EBay seller B).

However, he showed a general sign of targeting different markets based on different psychographics when the researcher probed him further regarding his customer base.

“At the moment, I am talking about three or four models of women” (catering to 3-4 different target markets) (RM19, EBay Seller B).

He further provided details of how he breaks up his market based on women with varied ages and lifestyle.

“Well, obviously I like to sell to all communities, the customers I have known the quality. This is only one market. Then there is other market where I cater middle class women between the ages of 26-77 to more mature women and lastly, I cater particularly the British Muslim girls I have a website for them” (RM19, EBay Seller B).

Here the participants revealed that he consciously divided his target market based on various age groups and social class. Other participants who happen to be from online retail businesses and food industry further reveals market segmentation based on gender difference and common interest when identifying target market.

“Age wise I'd say... I have jewellery that attracts young middle ages women so my main target would be young and middle aged women. So, mainly 20's to 30's and early 40's”.

(RM3, Artificial Jewellery manufacturer and supplier).

“I mainly focused on audience who are interested in fishing...That is why our website is named (Company name deleted)...as to appeal to everybody”. **(RF21, Amazon Seller B**

(Sportswear).

These findings suggest that these participants are not restricted to their own ethnic communities but extend their businesses to cater the wider mainstream market. Their main objective is to identify products which are currently in demand by the mainstream population and use it to gain competitive edge in the market. In addition, research participant's ability to segment their market based on specific demographics and psychographics follows traditional market segmentation by marketers (Zhixian Yi, 2018).

Muslim market

The second category of participants identified their market based on new lifestyle patterns and cultural and religious differences. One unique thing that stands among them is the use of cultural and religious values as a way to identify new markets. For example, as stated above the

eBay seller said that he has a customized website designed for young Muslim girls where he sells modest fashion (fully covered cloths) products to his customers. He believes that one of the key values of Islam is modesty and British Muslim women are looking to buy cloths which are not only trendy but are in line with Islamic belief system and values which emphasize on women to physically cover their themselves. This is something contrary to his products on his eBay site where he sell all kinds of products to anyone buying it. He further clarified about his website in terms of women who wear scarfs.

“This website is specifically designed for women (targeting Muslim women but others as well who want to wear modest cloths) who want to look fashionable while still wearing scarf but they nicely blend in with the girls who are born here and white, the fashion does the blending”(RM19, EBay Seller B).

However, there are seven more participants who confirmed to have consciously identified British Muslim consumers as their primary target market and are developing products and services, which are in line with their religious needs including lifestyle. For instance, two of the participants have developed Islamic toy store and Islamic greeting card business on Instagram for British Muslim consumers. Another two of the participants developed a mobile application and digital platform for Muslim consumers. Where the former claims to be the only mobile network for Muslim community in the UK and the later consider his business as a digital platform designed for Muslim entrepreneurs to market their products in accordance with Islamic values. There are three female participants who acts as business coach and life coach on Facebook exclusively created for Muslim women entrepreneurs in order to help them resolve their day-to-day issues in business and personal lives. All of these participants mentioned above revealed that it is their personal life experiences and their desire to use their potential to help their community (an Islamic value) that led them to identify this target market.

“I started this because I found it very artistic to sell Islamic greetings cards. it is something different from the regular greeting cards. I was determined to create a platform where we became that aspirational brand for young Muslim consumers to meet their lifestyle and aspirations in accordance with their faith” (RM15, Islamic greeting cards manufacturer and supplier)”

“We found a gap in the market. We have been looking at the market for a while and we saw the chances of growing telecommunication market. So we looked at the Muslim market and realised it is the fastest growing market and high spending market across the industry and nobody has brought the concept of bringing in all the services in one platform that Muslim community needs” (RF12, Islamic App developer).

“As a mother of two young children, I struggled to find good quality, Islamic toys and books for my children from one store. I was exhausted having to shop around in a number of places just to buy Islamic toys and Eid presents for my little ones. I saw a gap in the market and sought to fill it; thus making Ibraheem Toy House the first online Islamic toy store in the UK. At Ibraheem Toy House, our mission is to instil the love of Deen (Islam) in the future generations of the Muslim Ummah (community). We believe that children learn best through play and if the right educational toys and books are provided from a young age, we can instil the correct Islamic ethos and values in our children” (RF14, Islamic toy store supplier).

Changing cultural needs of ethnic market

Five participants stated that they do not differentiate their market based on ethnicity or religion. However, due to their own background (as British Muslims) and due to their ethnic

community oriented products they were only able to engage consumers within the same or similar communities. For example, one of the participant (online grocery retailer) state that he caters to mainstream consumers but due to the nature of his business and his personal contacts majority of his market comprised of ethnic consumers.

“Yeah it's a mix buzz. We have an English market, we have English customers and Christian customer not very large number but we do have them but mainly it is the Asian customers”

(RM11, Online Halal food delivery service).

Another participant developed online hookah service (water pipe for smoking) for young Asian community and deliver the service directly to their doorsteps. Although he wanted to cater to all the markets but due to the nature of his products (which is culture specific and mostly used by the ethnic community mainly Arabic and south Asians) he was only able to target a specific market.

“They are majorly desi (south Asian community). men or women didn't really matter because people ordered shisha pipes for weddings, parties or sometimes it was just a couple of friends who wanted to stay at home and chill...it was basically for people who do not want to go to shisha place” **(RM10, Online Hookah retailer).**

For these participants the ethnic market in the UK is always changing and new cultural trends are paving way for alternative ways to cater the changing needs of the ethnic community. Therefore, as stated above one of the current cultural trend among the young ethnic community is to go to Hookah cafes (a cost-effective alternative to Starbucks). However, due to the taboo nature of the product (ethnic families consider this as an alternative to cigarettes, hence frown upon it) the young members of the community especially females do not want to be seen in these cafes. Therefore, the participants who is from the similar background understand these cultural dynamics came up with an online delivery service for Hookah products which promises

to take the products to the customers home. This arrangement provides the customers to take advantage of the products in their homes and stay away from the prevailing gaze from the elders of their community.

In the same way, another participant identified that professional ethnic customers want ethnic food ingredients for their daily food consumption that they can only buy it from ethnic stores due to their busy lifestyle (changing cultural trend in ethnic community). Hence, the participant came up with the online delivery solution to provide ethnic food ingredients to their customer's doorstep. The identification of a market gap based on the changing lifestyle of professional members of ethnic community paved way for new business opportunities and created a new market segment for the participant to satisfy it.

Sustainability and Health conscious market

During the fieldwork, some of the participants revealed an insightful consumer trend that revolves around sustainable consumption and healthy lifestyle. These participants identify their target market based on the emerging environmentalist and healthy lifestyle that people are adopting. For instance, one participant who markets Islamic greeting cards reveal that he markets his products not just as Islamic but originating from green forests. As he further elaborated,

“It is about ethical sourcing, the cards that we are making are produced by material that comes from sustainable forests because the environment is important to everyone. So, it is important for them (customers) to know that we have environment friendly products and we care about it” (RF15, Islamic greeting cards manufacturer and supplier).

Four more research participants consciously use the health concerns of the modern-day consumer to for market segmentation. For instance, another participant who happens to be in

the ready to eat frozen meal business reveals the similar pattern when identifying target markets.

“I also own a food brand which is catering to everyone, all types of consumers. Like we have a brand, which is our Pakistani-Indian food, which suits to people's dietary requirements, as people are more concerned about oil and fat content, salt content in their food. They are aware of super foods and the benefits of certain spices” (RM5, Halal food manufacturer).

One can find the similar patterns among other participants who believe that the emerging trend of healthy living and environmentalism has influence them in terms of consumer segmentation.

“It is easier for people to buy McDonalds or stuff like that as compared to healthy food options.so we are targeting the audience who knows the value of healthy food. A little more investment takes towards better health” (RM18, Camel Milk supplier).

At present, the findings of this section reveal an interesting pattern emerging among participants and how they segment their consumer markets. The participant’s religious belief system and local (British) cultural values has a direct impact on their market identification and consumer segmentation. These research findings suggest the identification of entrepreneurial market opportunities of these participants are based on their personal interests, education, skill set, and ability to identify opportunity through common ethnic and religious experiences.

These participants also segment market based on the ever-changing lifestyle needs of the consumers. These needs are not limited to ones geographic or psychographics alone as suggested in contemporary marketing literature (Kotler, 2014) but also subjected to global influence, changing cultural trends and revolution in digital communication technologies. As stated by Castells (2011), the reason behind it could be the emergence of digital and social

media that provide individual and businesses with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with various other cultures and mind-set around the globe. This form of cultural exchange influence both business and consumer identity and pave way for alternative forms of market segments based upon similar interests and lifestyle (2011).

At present, the researcher has discussed how Islamic belief and British culture values influenced participant’s entrepreneurial actions. The section has also identified the reasons that led participants to start their business and comprehensively discussed their consumer segmentation strategy. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the social media communication activities employed by the participants to identify and engage customers and how it enabled them to become competitive in the market.

6.3 Communicating through Networks



Figure 6.4: Communicating through networking theme

The communication activities employed by research participants vary from business to business and depends upon the nature of the target market, entrepreneur's experiences and their ability to allocate resources to social media marketing. The findings also informed that the participants are mainly integrating their online and offline networks to increase brand awareness and customer engagement. For instance, one of the participants, an Audiologist use direct marketing by visiting hospitals, door to door marketing and distributing pamphlets which also mention her website and social media pages. She believes that since her target market is not on social media, so she has to use conventional marketing strategies to achieve her objective. Figure 6.4 summarize Communicating through networking theme.

“Generally in hospital, you have to do door to door visit anyway. Door to door, visits are usually for the elderly and the people who are less mobile and they will not be online much. So targeting the elderly with old school methods is the best. So far I have done local areas and where the GP moves...so that creates a lead” (RF7, Audiologist) .

However, the research participant recently started marketing hearing protection devices for young people who have hearing issues due to listening to the high pitch music. In this context she uses digital media more specifically website and Facebook.

“I want it (digital media communication) to be less clinical yet informative when it develops a bit more because it is targeting the younger generation as well for example, musicians in their 30s need to protect their ears from loud levels” (RF7, Audiologist) .

The participants in this research are using multiple communication activities to identify and engage their customers. All of the participants have stated that it is the resources which they have at their disposal that they use to identify markets and engage customers. Some of the sub-themes arising from these activities are as follow.

6.3.1 Personalized Social Media Profiles

Majority of the participants are using social media as a starting point to communicate about their products and services. In the earlier days of their business, they tend to advertise through their existing personal profiles on both digital and social media. They provide regular updates regarding their business activities, which also included a sneak peek into their personal and professional lives. At the same time, some of the participants took help from whom they perceived as social media experts in the friend and family circles, and developed and shared relevant content including blogs, for brand awareness and developing customer network.

“I use Facebook a lot and last few weeks we have been doing posts about myself. This is to tell people about my career background so that they feel more connected to me. The first thing that I did, was to tell my friend who was a social media expert and I started to network within the Birmingham area. ((RM11, Online Halal food delivery service).

“The first thing I did was, I start my blog. I was always into books and I reviewed them, people started to know me more through the blog (RF16, TV presenter and lifestyle coach).

“Showing people (on Facebook) what we are up to, what our products are about, new activities that we are doing, happenings at the office, events that we are at, things we are doing, sampling, opportunities, giveaways” (RM5, Halal food manufacturer).

One of the main communication activities these participants have used to build brand awareness, and identify potential consumers include: social marketing, utilization of social media analytics and self-promotional activities.

“I also use Facebook audience insights. I target audience, who are interested in the products, and then I make an ad. Then that ad has my website link so when people see it they directly land on my webpage and buy from there. Facebook automatically does that. If you have an audience, then Facebook send your ad automatically to the targeted people”. **(RF21,**

Amazon Seller B(Sportswear).

“We are doing a charity event in two weeks. In two weeks we will be pushing on social media about our company's ethics, how we are growing as a company and we want to encourage people to be a part of our campaign to help with our cause **(RM18, Camel milk supplier).**

“I post pictures of myself wearing my jewellery pieces. So if I don't post pictures for a week then I don't get much sales so it works that way. They like you so they will like what you are wearing and buy it. So my marketing strategy is to utilise myself in showcasing my jewellery.

I do that twice a week and I mainly focus on getting good followers as it makes a huge difference” **(RF3, Artificial Jewellery manufacturer and supplier).**

The ease of using oneself as a brand ambassador is one of the main benefits of social media since it provides these participants the opportunity to create, edit and manage their self-presentation. This unique feature of social media enables these entrepreneurs to create desired communication messages to their customer as compare to the offline environment. However, as stated above one has to be regular with product updates on social media and only accept relevant followers to reap its full benefits. Otherwise, non-consistent approach towards social

media and accepting irrelevant fans or followers that have nothing to do with the business will hurt the effectiveness of communication activities on social media.

Moreover, the use of social media analytics help these participates to identify relevant consumer segments and send them the related content to generate business leads. Social marketing on the other hand creates a positive image of the company in the mind of the consumers. The participants feel that the promotion of socially oriented events through their social media pages is not about marketing their products and services. However, it helps them to achieve their overall vision of using their business as a way for community development based on their ethnical and religious belief system (more details on this topic are in the subsequent theme). The participants also use the pictures, videos and experiences gained in these events as potential content for their social media pages.

6.3.2 Social Media Community

Active Participation in relevant social media groups is another important network communication activity among participants. These SM groups, created for people with common interest and shared lifestyle, help participants to identify their markets and engage potential customers.

“Yeah, the groups are small and have common interests. So that was to gain interest in similar business offers” (RM13, Digital platform provider).

Majority of the Social media groups these participants have joined are not limited to mainstream groups but also include groups that have an ethnic and religious background. As one of the participant said,

“I started from groups for healthy eating, cooking and weight loss first then I noticed more and more Asians were adding me and redirecting me on other groups so that's how it started.

(RF1, Dietitian).

“So, my customers are Muslim mothers. I would be going on pages on social media where the Muslim women are” **(RF14, Islamic toy store supplier).**

“I started off with just a simple landing page that asked about business interest. So on the first day I had 30 interested businesses (clients) and then I said, ok let's start it” **(RM21,**

Digital platform provider).

When asked how he got the clients he said, *“I found them through Facebook”* and further explained that *“No, not a Facebook page. It was a landing page. Actually, these businesses were from various Facebook groups. I posted on groups if anyone would be interested in such business and so it came from there”* **(RM21, Digital platform provider).**

Another participant further described the process of how she was able to identify potential markets and engaged them by joining social media groups.

“I am very targeted about the people I choose to connect with and that time I could do a quick search on Facebook. I looked for friends of friends and entrepreneurial groups and communities. There is this community, metaphorical business group in which I invested so this is an online marketer coach and they have a program called B-schooling which has around ten to fifteen thousand people on it and I took those classes and they have helped a lot. I got many clients from there too. So when I was investing in myself, I was getting more and more exposure to the right kind of people I wanted to be surrounded with **(RF17,**

Marketing and Branding consultant).

Identification of the relevant social media group is essential for these participants in order to expand their market and engage customers. However, what makes these participants different from the mainstream entrepreneurs is the ability to utilize their ethnic and religious heritage to build networks. As stated by two participants, their Asian heritage and religion also played an important role in terms of expanding their markets.

In addition, participants' usage of these social media groups are not limited to their common business interest but also include their shared struggle and lifestyle. For example, one of the female participants who is a business consultant regularly participates on a Facebook group for female Muslim entrepreneurs she regularly shares common work and personal issues.

“One of the Sisters made this (Facebook) community because sisters wanted to be close to sisters who have similar interest and struggles. There are so many women who are going through similar things in life and they can share their struggles and personal stories over such communities so basically it is for like-minded sisters who can advise strategically through their experiences” (RF20, Amazon Seller A).

She further explained that these groups allow female Muslim entrepreneurs to discuss and resolve their business and personal issues and act as an emotional support system. The issues discussed in these groups ranged from how to create effective communicational messages to gain more followers (customers), to balancing family and work life. She also stated that this form of close and personal contact not only builds long-term partnerships based on trust and mutual support but also opens up various new market opportunities for the members.

6.3.3 Content Marketing

During the interviews, another emerging sub-theme is the generation of relevant content on social media networks to identify markets and engage customers. The participants regularly created and shared content (both visual and text) in the form of quotations, personal inspirational messages both on their personal and group Social media pages to gain their customers attention.

This form of content placement involves sharing relevant (interesting) content on these forums, posting questions, and commenting on each other content that includes listening to each other and providing adequate advices. When asked how you are able to engage potential customer on these social groups, one of the participant said,

“You give them what they are interested in. You give them photos and visual stuff and they will like it and share it and that will create engagement. You need to have high quality, creativity to catch the eye for this” (RM21, Digital platform provider).

“Showing them that how your product can have a positive impact in their lives “(RF21, Amazon Seller B).

Another participant said,

“Questions. As soon as you put out question there, people will respond but if you make a statement then they don't react that much” (RF16, TV Presenter and lifestyle coach).

“Facebook group is not only a business page but also a community where people listen to each other and sort out similar problems” (RF2, Herbal lifestyle coach).

As stated by the participants, the scope of these social media groups is not limited to providing communication opportunities. However, the members in these groups provide guidance to each other and help them both in their personal and professional lives. The main thing, which the research has noticed in these interviews, is the idea of common British Muslim values experienced by the participants. This common identity provides them with the ability to integrate their personal belief system with their specific business and use it for individual and community development. As eloquently put by one of the participants.

“See the group is me. It's not my business it is everything about my life and things that I have gone through and at the end of the day, I love to work with my Deen (Islam) really. I want to work for the Ummah (Muslim community). I want to serve my kind...what I do serves this purpose so I am connected to a business that helps me, the community and that is my dream to help my people” (RF2, Herbal lifestyle coach).

“When it comes to content then you have to make sure that it is in line with your business or it is in line with your personality so my content could be about being someone who can inspire someone to make better choices in their business but I got to have the balance”

(RF9,Marketing Consultant).

Some of the participants have stressed on the value of systematic content generation to engage customer. For example, one of the participant, a lifestyle coach, believes in strategic content marketing in which one can run an organized content on social media. In other words it means automation of content generation for a definite period of time without manually publishing it.

“I ran strategic content campaign and I had lots and lots of content running (publishing content daily through automated applications) and this means I do not have to be on social media all the time pitching people and posting content” (RF9, Marketing Consultant).

The automation of content publishing on social media enables the participant to reduce time in manually creating and publishing content on a daily basis. It also enables the participant to project her brand on social media as highly active and connected with the customers.

“What people do wrong with content generation is that they are in a phase of business where they are highly active and then they suddenly disappear. So what happens is that this dis-engagement cost a lot in the long run it is very important to post content every week” (RF9, Marketing Consultant).

In addition, content placement on social media is influenced by participants’ experiences and their belief system.

“You have your life experiences and lessons...and you are always learning. Whatever I learn as a Muslim woman I share it (on social media). I make it into a poem and I know they are Islamic quotations but I do not preach there unless someone wants to know then I would tell them. I share my thinking going on that day and that is it... my Facebook page is all about motivation and inspiration” (RF1, Dietitian).

This idea of sharing one’s belief system including things of mutual interest with customer allow these participants to express both their business and personal sides. It makes customer feel that they are not in contact with the company but people who are just like them and share common interest and values. This form of awareness enables both the participants and the customers to develop long-term relationship based on their ability to share what they find important with each other.

Moreover, the participants have also stated the sharing religious content on SM platforms.

“On my personal group we have a faith reminder, so I post verse from Quran about gratitude and thankfulness. Then we ask sisters that what that verse means to them or we share prophet’s story showing that everybody has had hardships. So this is how it is there.it is about faith, health and entrepreneurship” (RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

The sharing of religious content and subsequent discussion on social media platforms allow these participants to connect with their audiences and develop trust. Although, during the interviews the participants said that they did not consciously think of it as a communication activity. They feel that sharing of religious content on social media is their way of personally connecting with their God and makes them feel happy that through their act of sharing they are able to make a positive contribution towards society.

“It is in a verse of surah Ibrahim (Quranic chapter) that if you are grateful for what you have then Allah will bless you with more and this is what I want to show people out there. When I post religious things, I convey this message” (RF16, TV Presenter and lifestyle coach).

“I give (share religious content) it to others because I do not see them as my customers, I see them as my Muslim brethren” (RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

This idea of considering customer as your fellow religious brothers or sisters and customizing ones social media content for their spiritual well-being negates the traditional definition of marketing which is about identifying and satisfying the material needs of one’s customer. These participants are moving one-step further by identifying and satisfying spiritual needs of their customers through cultural appropriation and using both Islamic and non-Islamic motivational and aspirational content. As they believe, it is their duty as Muslims to use their business to spread the word of God and create meaningful difference in the lives of their

customer. For these participants, marketing is not restricted to one product or service but it also includes marketing the beliefs and mind-set of the seller for both the material and spiritual betterment of society.

During the fieldwork, participants also stated the use of motivation content on social media. They believe that the consistent sharing of such content is not only keeping their brand alive in the minds of the customers. In addition, it motivates and inspires the readers and makes them feel good about themselves. This feeling of positivity then has an indirect impact on their brand as well since the customer consciously and sub-consciously associate the motivational content with the brand.

“I post quotes that I randomly come across and I like these posts so I post them to inspire”

(RF3, Online jewellery Supplier).

Majority of the quotes shared by the participants obtained from iconic western figures such as Richard Branson, Bill Gates, President Obama, Oprah, Bernard Shaw and many more. The reason behind it to gain inspirational and motivation from these the life struggle of these individuals and share it with their customers online.

Academic research has also indicated the use of online blogging as an important aspect of social media communication. However, in this research only seven out 26 participants have claimed the use of blogging to engage customers. Majority of these participants believed that blogging is vital for their connection with their target audiences.

“I do have a blog on my sight and I think blogging is especially important for people who shop on e-stores. Moreover, the blog makes your website SEO friendly” **(RF24, TV**

presenter and business coach).

The SEO friendliness of blogs allow customers to easily gain access to the participants advertised content by typing keywords on Google search engine. Moreover, it provides

participants with an opportunity to discuss things beyond business propositions and develop long-term relationship with customers by engaging in discussions of mutual importance.

“I also write daily blog about self-help where people could just go and read up and comment on any topic, like, how can I apply it in my life and get on board” (RF16, TV Presenter and lifestyle coach).

These blogs are not restricted to their business but also include content related to participant’s personal belief system and display how they perceive this world and their place in it. As stated by one of the participant,

“As long as I am connected to my faith and I am promoting it on Facebook as it connects people who are linked with my blogs. So, people would know that, ok she is not just a dietician as dieticians are perceived as food police” (RF1, Dietitian).

In addition, some of the participants who cannot write blogs send their products for free to bloggers who are popular with their target market. These bloggers then inform their followers on their social media accounts about these products and help create brand awareness and develop sales opportunities.

“I send my products to bloggers and when they open it up they write about what they found and how was it. So their followers read and since they (bloggers) have more followers, they become a source for marketing as people would then order from me after reading their blogs” (RF14, Islamic Toy store supplier).

Sending products to various bloggers not only increases brand awareness but also help these participants to take advantage of blogger’s online reputation and develop positive image of their brands among potential customers.

Moreover, research participants are increasingly posting positive customer reviews to develop trust among their target audiences. For example, one of the participants indicated the posting of customer reviews on social media as an essential aspect of communications.

“People actually want to hear from users about the product they are going to buy so I always teach my members the same thing that whenever you buy or someone buys from you, do review them because no one wants to be the first one to try the product” (RF 8,

Entrepreneurial Consultant).

Moreover, positive reviews not only enhance business image but also translates into actual sales.

“We have platinum account and we have more than 100 thousand reviews on our single stock. We have couple of stocks on eBay and if I talk about last six months, we do not have a single negative review from customers. So yes, we have good position on eBay and amazon in terms of achieving objectives on sales” (RM26, Ebay seller C).

6.4 Integrating social media Channels

Some of the participants stated the usage of multiple social media channels simultaneously to communicate with their customers,

“I am very active on my social media so whatever I post on my Instagram, I share it on Facebook and snapchat as well. So with snapchat, people screen shot the story and then go to the website to shop for it” (RF3, online jewellery supplier).

She further stated that use of multiple social media channels helps her customers to makes sales decisions on the spot. For instance, she would upload her picture online wearing her collection

of jewellery with a link at a bottom of one her social media accounts that takes a customer to her website for further information about her products and how they can buy it. She also believes that her various social media accounts cater to different market. Therefore, she simultaneously use all of these accounts to expand her market presence and increase her consumer base.

Other participants also noted the difference among social media accounts in terms of market diversification. As they believe, each social media platforms cater to a variety of consumer segments based on their gender, age and purchasing power. For example, majority of the participants felt that Facebook caters the adult market with high purchasing power as compare to Instagram that mainly target the young crowd. The reason behind it is Instagram's ability to provide easy access to its members (Instagram is only available on mobile media) and various tools to enhance the quality of their pictures as compare to Facebook.

“The thing with Instagram is that not old people tend not to be on Instagram and it's the older people (who are on Facebook) can afford these meals because the meals are not cheap. Instagram is something that people check daily but Facebook is something that people check when they have free time” (RM11, Online Halal food delivery service).

“Marketing (on Instagram) can spread like fire, Facebook is something that can hold more information but then you need people to take their time out to actually look at it (RM18, Camel Milk supplier).

“Every platform are different in terms of audience engagement and serves with respect to that engagement Like snapchat has more ease so and security so a lot of people use it rather than Facebook” (RM5, Halal food manufacturer).

“So they say at twitter, "I am easting a samosa" So it is like a language...' i am eating a samosa' on Facebook, it is, " I like samosa", on YouTube, " This is how I eat my samosa" on Instagram it would be a classic picture of samosa...blog, " Here is my samosa eating experience" and Pinterest would be" Samosa recipe" with four pictures attached to it”

(RM19, Online grocery delivery supplier)

The usage of various social media accounts enables these participants to increase their market presence and reach various niche consumer segments based on varied interests and ethnicities. For example, majority of the followers of these participants on social media platforms are people from their own British Muslim community that as stated by Jamal (2015), cannot be target by mainstream media. This form of community engagement through social media gives these participants a competitive edge in the market and helps them retain a royal customer base founded on customized products and services that satisfy the unique needs of their community.

6.5 Integrating social media and offline environments

The usage of various social media platforms simultaneously is not limited to the virtual world but also enter into the physical world. As stated by majority of the participants, social media is not the only platform they use for marketing purposes. They believed that the continuous overlapping of social media and offline environments help them create brand awareness build contacts and generate sales opportunities.

“I have my social media so that I update my customers with the activities. When I go out and meet new people, I offer them my pre-services and when they are done with it, I offer them if

they would like to be on my Facebook page to grow my contacts and links (RF2, Herbal lifestyle coach).

These participants think that this form of one to one physical interaction, which is not available in online environments, help them to put a human face on their brands and gain customer trust. This form of interaction also enabled the participants to take pictures with them and upload it on social media account which further authenticate their brand image and create a positive image of these participants in the minds of their customers.

Majority of these participants participated in various consumer oriented seminars and events and set up their stalls to meet with their customers and market their products and services. It has been noted that all of the participants inform their existing clients on social media that they are going to these events and invite them to take part in it. Some of the participants even provide discounted tickets of these events and offer to personally meet with their customers. During the events, these participants interact with their customer, take pictures with them, answer queries and collect consumer insights. Once the event is over, these participants go back to their social media pages and share these insights with their customers including customer reviews in the form of pictures and videos. This process helps these participants to further customize their products and services in accordance with the needs of their customer and create a sense of community around their brands.

As stated above, research participants are using communicating through networking approach by personalizing social media pages and participating in groups to market their products and services. In these pages, they promote themselves as brand ambassadors and share their personal stories to connect with their audiences on a personal level. They use paid advertising, SEO and social media analytics to increase market share. The participant also integrate their social media and offline environments to develop effective communication activities to

increase brand awareness and customer engagement. The participants believe in generation of relevant and consistent content on social media platforms based on similar British Muslim experiences, positive customer reviews and blogs. At present, the researcher has shown that participant's British Muslim experiences has an important role to play on their content strategy. Therefore, in the next section, the researcher will depict how participants religious beliefs based on British Muslim experiences influence their communication activities on social media.

6.6 British Muslim Marketing

6.6.1 Ethics and Morality

This theme informs the reader about whether there is any relationship between Islamic belief and social media communication activities of the participants. During the fieldwork, participants have individually discussed and debated the influence of Islamic belief and British cultural values in their daily life in general and on their online communication activities in particular. One of the major sub-themes emerging from these discussions is that the participants do not distinguish between Islamic and British values. They believe that their religious belief system and British values are comprised of ethical and moral values; therefore, one cannot distinguish them as both teach universal morality and ethics. Figure 6.5 further summarizes British Muslim marketing theme.



Figure 6.5: British Muslim marketing theme

“Don’t cheat don’t lie every possible good thing that is there, they (parents) will tell you... I think all these things are something that British parents tell their children nothing different”.

(RM10, Online Hookah Supplier)

“He (customer)said, "Why are you (helping me)doing this?" and I said, “because my religion teaches us” so does Christianity, so does Buddhist and other religions...but why are we not able to do it as humans? Is because we have forgot to...back to the point, to love humans”

(RM23, EBay seller A).

“No, I target everybody. As a Muslim woman, I think...I should help all irrespective of gender, race or religion. It’s for all”. (RF1, Dietitian).

The idea that every religion is similar in terms of ethics and morality and one has no right to differentiate oneself from the rest based on one’s belief system is the recurring theme in this research. The participants from time to time provided examples of how they use their ethical beliefs system and values while they are communicating with their audience on social media platforms.

“I think, justice is the most important thing. Speaking the truth when you are online... and not just praise yourself all the time tell people the right thing keep on learning (Gain consumer insights) and keep on growing. I learn and then I help my clients” (RF17,

Marketing and Branding consultant).

“Sometimes when people have come to us and they don’t realize that there is actually a promotion, or they can receive discounts .but just not giving them discounts that they are entitled to we feel bad, we might be losing money in some parts but people coming back to us

because we treat them good, we treat them in a Islamic way. We do not rip people” (RM6, Halal meal prep company).

“It (ethics) gives you focus, professionalism by understanding your ethics, it gives you leverage, it gives you a deeper understanding of your consumers. So I would say if you apply these ethics and values, you understand your customer better and the Muslim customer is not like any other customer. They are driven by their values...and I think general ethics like respecting others, coming on time, working hard, being professional and dressing up decently as Muslims is what we learn generally from Islam and that is something that is being implemented in our work” (RM13, Digital platform provider).

These participants believe that the use of ethics as part of one’s communication activity is not just about being good human. Professionally it is a sound logical decision to remain ethical and moral in daily interaction with the customer since it create long-term relationship with clients based on honesty and mutual respect. Moreover, it provides these participants with a competitive edge as they are in better position to understand the needs of their customers, build long-term relationships, and use customer’s honest feedback to enhance the quality of their products and services.

6.6.2 Islamic Neeya (orientation) and Dawah as Communication activity

During the interviews, the participants from time to time discussed the role of Dawah (Islamic religious belief that makes it compulsory for every Muslim to spread the message of God in their daily life). The participants believe that it is their religious obligation to use their personal and professional lives as a way to spread Islamic teachings. However, their intention is not to convert non-Muslims into Muslims but embody the principals of Islam as part of their

personality to create a positive image of their religion in the minds of their customers. For example, one of the participant has said that during her online interaction with their customer she uses the word God instead of *Allah* to makes the customer feel and understand the universal spirituality behind her message instead of making them feel that someone is deliberating trying to display there is god better than their own. This is one way for these participants to project their how their Islamic belief system influence their communication activities on social media networks.

“I use Islam as an opportunity to spread Dawah. When people look at me, they ask me where am I from? So I tell them then they ask me why you are Muslim? So it opens the door to that.

When a women goes like, ok now that I am a muslimah..I'll change my name to, let's say, Aisha and I'll wear naqab and stay behind my closed doors. There goes your opportunity of Dawah...People want to know who they are talking to, it helps them build connection”

(RM9, Marketing consultant).

Communication activities for these participants are not only related to marketing their products and services but also about sharing a positive image of Islam through their online ethical and moral conduct with their customers. In this way the participants feel that are obliging their religious responsibility and making a positive difference in their customer lives. Moreover, contradictory to the mainstream view of Muslim women as suppressed by the patriarchal society through vail. The female participants in this research believe that it is their duty as Muslims to portray a positive image of their religion by personifying the principles of Islam as part of their social media personality.

“When we market to the mainstream consumer, we do our part in showing our values, our character, our qualities and what our phenomenon (Islamic value) is” **(RM5, Halal food**

manufacturer).

“I love to work with my Deen (religion) online, want to work for the Ummah. The work I do serves this purpose so I am connected to a business that helps the community and that is my dream to help my people”. (RF1, Dietitian).

The above-mentioned quotations highlight the firm conviction of the participants that it is their religious responsibility to integrate their Islamic belief system as part of their communication activities. For these participants marketing is not just about selling their commercial products and services. It is also about fulfilling that spiritual vacuum which they feel exist among their consumers and can only be satisfied by religious nourishment that requires individuals to trust in God in order to resolve their daily life issues.

6.6.3 Modesty

Being modest on social media is one of the recurring themes in this research. The participants believe that Islam teaches them to be modest on social media. Here being modest is not limited to covering oneself online but also involve non-exaggerated way of communicating with ones customers.

“Islam says, you need to speak the truth in any case. Other religions say that too but in Islam, it is a law to speak truth. So, when we are dealing online, we make sure we display the colours and specifications exactly like the real product. Whereas, others are using editors and effects, we don't. Our shoes height is usually 3 inches so there is no need to show a model wearing it but others showing model in less clothes wearing their shoes. In Islam you need to cover the body, so, we do not show models' body to display our product. We just show the shoe part that how you are going to look wearing that specific article (RM26, EBay seller C).

“You see I sell all kinds of clothes even the sexier ones to the English crowd. So, even if my clothes are sexy, I would not picture them any sexier” (RM6 EBay women cloths retailer).

“Islam teaches us to be modest and it has a effect on my social media as I dress modestly, I do not wear much makeup because I don't want people to get attracted to my face. I want them to get attracted towards my personality and for what I do. So, if you see, I am not overdressed or under dressed. I look pleasant” (RF16, TV presenter and lifestyle coach).

As stated earlier, for these participants their religious teachings such as being modest in their personal and professional lives influence their communication activities on social media. The participants stated that one has to portray the un-edited version of their products on social media since they believe that the edited version is something that deceive loyal customers which is not only appropriate for their business and contradictory to their religious belief.

Also female participants in this research only showcase their pictures in which they feel they are adequately covered. The reason behind uploading of these pictures is for customers to get to know more about participant's personality and their actions (including products) which are in line with Islamic belief instead of their physical looks.

6.6.4 Halal and Haram distinction

The idea of Halal and Haram is associated with things, which is permitted and non-acceptable in Islam. For instance, the participants have stated that their religion do not allow them to sell alcohol, pig meat, take interest and involve themselves in gambling. In the

context of social media communication, they tend to sell only those products that are in accordance with Islam.

“We do not want to sell products that we think are un-Islamic. If we do not think that such products are good for us then how are we going to sell it to others? So, we don't”

(RM4 EBay Seller D).

“There was a supplier that came to us, who wanted to sell lingerie. It is not un-Islamic to sell it but how can we sell it by putting it over a model? That is un-Islamic we cannot have an actual woman wearing it and displaying at our website (including social media pages). We said, look we can't. We can put it on a plastic model but not on an actual woman and put it outside it is not Islamic. They were Muslims. They wanted to target Muslim market, but we told them that you can't do it with us because it is un-Islamic. It is just not feasible for the Muslim market because you cannot restrict the viewer to ladies only” **(RM13, Digital platform provider).**

The participants have emphasized the idea of differentiating between *halal* and *haram* in their social media communications. They strongly believe that one can only sell products on social media which is in line with their religious belief. Although, sales of lingerie is something which is not un-Islamic but to sell it even with mannequins and presenting it on one's social media pages is for some participants is not Islamic.

6.6.5 Cultural values

Apart from religious values, the cultural background of the participants also influence their daily social media communications strategies. As stated above, the participants believe that their cultural values are not solely derived from their ethnic and religious background but also their geographic space which is British. The participants argue that cultural values are also universal in nature and they have acquire it both from their ethnic community and mainstream British environment.

“Yes, don't cheat (with customers online) don't lie. Every possible good thing that is there, they will tell you... I think all these things are something that British parents tell their children. Nothing different” (RM10, Online Hookah Supplier).

Moreover, there are various social structures in the British society that influence Participants and there social media communication activities. Some of the most important influencer's which the participants discuss include family and friends, education institutions and the media.

During the fieldwork, the participants noted their Friends and family are an important influence in both their personal and professional lives. Majority of the participants claim that their cultural values that their parents have taught them help them in their business.

“Islam is very big thing, hard work is also a thing, watching our parents work, sometimes my dad works two or three o'clock in the morning just to send us to grammar school. The hard work that they showed us, the fact that you put your kids, family before everything. No matter how far you have to work for it, that's just what you have to do” (RM6, Halal meal prep company).

One can notice the idea of hard work and putting your family first are a kind of values which are highly visible on participants' social media pages in the form of sharing family pictures, uploading quotations, and sharing family stories with customers. Family also influence participants in terms of how they deal with their customers online.

“My father had a small grocery shop where my mother used to be as well and she told me how to be always polite with people and how to deal with customers and in my business, where I meet all sorts of people. I stay polite with them and it has helped me a lot in being who I am today...and it is not just because of Islam it is because of the values taught to me by my parents as well as my school” (RF3, Online jewellery Supplier).

Educational institutions also come out as an important factor that mediate British cultural values to the participants. As stated above, the participants have said that it is not only the family which promote the value of being polite with others but this particular value is also mediated through British schools as they are also responsible for the moral development of the participants. As stated by the same participant,

“Even in school, which was British, I was taught to be polite and sympathetic towards people so when a customer comes to me with a complaint, I listen to them and give them what they ask for and they always come back to me. I have customers who message me (online) who ask me that Oh look, I have this and that so what would go well with it? so if I was a girl who had no time for anyone and just want to make money and gain interest then I might not make any money at all so I do what's right and nice so that it portrays my business image in a good way” (RF3, Online jewellery supplier).

Participants also stated that their family and the educational system promote the values of respecting each other, trust, being tolerant to alternative opinions and valuing patience in the daily life. The participants use these values as part of their daily social media communications. In addition, the cultural values mediated through family and the education system also encourage female participants to take part in business activities and close the gap between gender disparities in the marketplace. As one of the female participant who runs British female Muslim entrepreneurial club on social media wrote on her Facebook wall,

“Oh yes! The world can see that we can do whatever we want to. We are not bounded. Islam does not stop us from working and culture doesn't stop us from working and we are smart as any other woman” (RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

During the fieldwork, the researcher has noticed that majority of the female participants are more active on social media as compare to the male participants. They tend to share more of their personal yet inspirational stories on their online pages and discuss women issues along with product promotion. When asked if this is true one of the female participants said,

“I think yes because you know that they say there is always something good hidden in bad. so because women need to prove themselves, they are more stronger now and they are even better at work than men. They are now being offered positions at top level management and because they were not being offered to them before so they created it for themselves. They became entrepreneurs, they became successful in so many ways that people could not believe that women can run a business and be that successful so for me it is positive because as woman we do not have anything to loose. We can only excel whereas, men are so contended with themselves that they are not expected to improve” (RM13, Digital platform provider).

The discussion above illustrates that it might be the digital medium of the internet that enable women to speak for their issues and rights. However, the promotion of gender equality and women's right is a British value that has an impact on the way the female participants think and share their views online.

6.7 British Muslim Networking

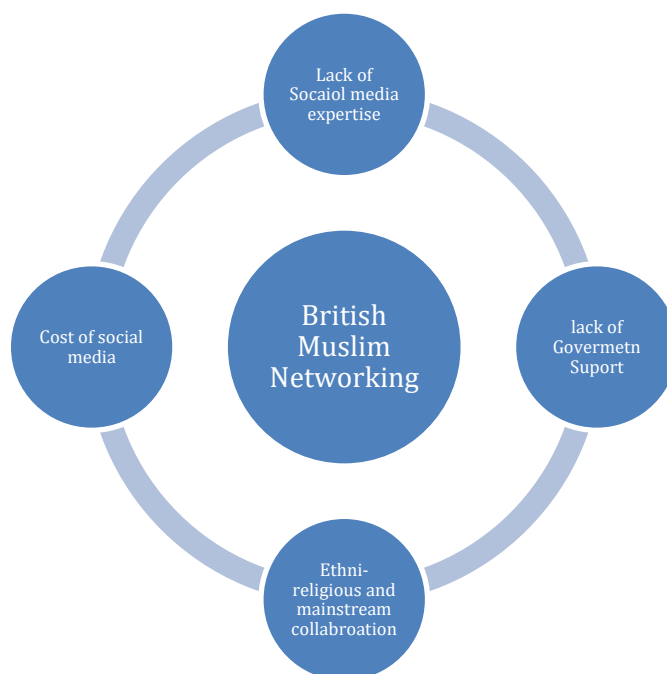


Figure 6.6: British Muslim Networking

6.7.1 Lack of social media expertise

One of the main communication issues these participants are having is related to customer engagement. They feel that they have a good product, but they lack both technical and communication expertise in terms of reaching and engaging customers on social media. They also believed that there is too much advertising clutter on social media, which makes it difficult for them to reach customers. Figure 6.7 summarizes British Muslim networking theme.

“I think the biggest issue is engagement. There is so much noise on social media these days with the hype of videos and live sessions that people have started to ignore many things. They just don't pay attention” (RF25, Marketing consultant).

“Lack of experience, you can buy anything except experience people buy likes on Facebook and twitter but they cannot buy experience” (RM23, EBay seller A).

There is a growing realization among participants that too much clutter on social media (from competitors) and their lack of experiences requires them to identify alternative ways to remain competitive on social media platforms. These alternatives include outsourcing their social media marketing to specialized digital marketing firms, self-help, invest in social media analytics and acquire friends and family help through extended networks.

“Right now it is just a website in design but I feel that it will require content writing and outsourcing management because it requires a lot of effort in building a brand”
(RF9, Marketing Consultant).

“I had a lot of difficulties in the beginning because of the lack of my knowledge. I did not know about logo designing and printing etc and that too came in when I googled it” (RF8
Amazon Kitchen appliance retailer)

“The logo is there with my brother's friend's help. I told him what I want, what colours I need to work with and all. So basically it was his helping hand that created the logo” (RF7,
Audiologist).

“I am thinking about Instagram (for product promotion) as my children say I should” (RF1,
Dietitian).

“We just had Pay per click (ppc) service an hour ago where they give our subscribers a free recipe E-book” (RM11 Online Halal food delivery service).

The outsourcing of social media marketing activities to specialized firms, friends and family members who have expertise in this field provide entrepreneurs with the opportunity to focus on other aspects of business. Social media analytics services provided by Facebook and Instagram help entrepreneurs organize customer data (in the form of customer's comments, likes, reviews etc.), and identify key insights for product customization and targeted marketing services. However, majority of the entrepreneurs are adopting learning by doing approach to minimize the overall cost. Google is another option that help participants understand the communication requirements on social media and what the participants can do to create better communication activities online.

Similarly, other participants face similar issues as they attempt to communicate their product message to the targeted customers on social media. Some of the communication issues they encounter on social media include handling negative customer feedback, developing updated websites, cost of social media advertising including pricing, and lack of time towards learning social media marketing skills-set.

“I have not been able to look into it (website) much due to my full time work. So I want to do more shoots and build my website and make it look exactly the way I wanted it to look... I want more professional images to be there”. **(RF3, online jewellery supplier).**

“Negative comments, hatred, hacked IDs and persona attacks. But I don't take them as hurdles because when your brand is well established then you cannot really control such behaviour other challenges are mainly related to finances like Facebook advertisements”

(RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

All the participants agree with the point that negative comments including negative feedback about products and personal attacks are part of social media. There is no way one can hide from it therefore; one has to provide excellent customer service and handle these issues with patience and think of it as valuable learning experience.

Majority of the participants sometimes receive negative product feedback on social media. They believe that the best way to react to these feedbacks is to admit customer grievances and resolve it while making sure there is no repetition of it. The participants also provide detail account of their product on social media that also lower negative feedback including money back guarantees.

“Customer happiness is very difficult we try to explain everything in the listing. Like, we are selling shoes.so; we are giving all the details in terms of shoe length, material and everything. If customer is willing on exchange then we give them exchange product but if not then we have to refund them” (RM26, EBay seller C).

Moreover, female participants in this research have stated that they are highly likely to face unwanted male attention on social media that limit their ability to identify and engage relevant target market.

“I struggle (on social media) because men add me and I am reluctant because they think that I am some marriage proposal! They are like are you single? And I tell them no. Then they ask me if I know someone who is! I mean, I am not that kind of a person! ” (RF16, TV presenter and lifestyle coach).

“I look into the comment and if it has any hate speech or something that is against giveaway or product. I simply block that person” (RM14, Islamic toy store supplier).

This is one of the most common problem female participant's encounter when communicating their business message on social media. However, same as with male participants they feel that the best way to deal with these issues is to inform the male customers that they are only here on social media for professional reasons. Some female participants ignore such comments or message on social media while others simply delete such contacts. In addition, there is a new trend among these female participants which is the use of their family pictures and discussing their families on their personal account which they feel is much better way to call- off unwanted male attention.

6.7.2 Cost of social media advertising and Pricing

As stated previously by participants that social media is a cost effective platform for marketing. However, due to increasing competition on social media sites, these participants are moving toward paid online advertising to attain competitive edge in the online market.

“Unless you pay something to Facebook, it's not going to work alone people won't see your posts”. **(RM14, Islamic toy store supplier).**

“The website is still being designed because there is limited funds to build it. We do not have enough money to take professional photographs. Once the website is built then sales will increase a lot more rapidly because it's a lot easier to order” **(RM6, Halal meal prep company).**

The rising cost of social media analytics is one of the reasons that limit the ability of the participants to take full advantage of what social media has to offer. The participants state that the high cost of social media paid advertisement services makes it difficult for them to reach and engage their audiences. Also, other online promotional techniques such as taking quality

pictures of ones products requires financial resources to acquire the services of professional photographers.

6.7.3 Ethno-religious and mainstream collaboration

In order to resolve above mention issues, the participants increasingly used online and offline British Muslim networks to gain relevant experiences. Business development through British Muslim networking is considered as an important aspect among research participants and an alternative way to acquire business resources ranging from financial capital to marketing expertise. The participants believe that government and mainstream private sector has failed to support their businesses; therefore, it is up to the minority firms to join forces together for capacity building and enterprise development. As one of the participant who provides a digital platforms, funding and marketing services to small British Muslim firms have stated,

“We are doing this to reduce the lack of support that we have in a Muslim minority country. We have reached various organizations things are there on paper, but they are different from reality. The bottom line is that the support is unfair” (RM13, Digital platform provider).

These participants also feel that since British Muslims are relatively small community, the Government find it less attractive to mobilize their resources in order to resolve their business Problems. This strong feeling of lack of support from the Government including private and NGO sectors have compelled these participants to come to gather and pool their resources in order to gain a competitive edge in the market. These participants also felt that it is their shared identity that makes them feel part of a larger community and has the potential to help them both personally and professionally. The formation of group identity due to shared heritage

provides these participants with an opportunity to build both personal and professional networks for business development and support. As stated by one of the participant,

“You have the identity with all the British Pakistanis you have like relationships, so no matter whether you go to a new place, you can always make new friends very easily even if you don’t know them before” (RM6, Halal meal prep company).

The purpose of British Muslim networks among research participants is twofold. Firstly, these participants use these networks for collaborative reasons that include building professional contacts and taking advantage of each other marketing experience.

“I think collaboration is great, collaboration is good when you have mutual benefits. If you think you have the synergy with other brand and you think things will be good, then you should collaborate. It is a very good way to bounce each other’s followings (both in online and offline environments)” (RM5, Halal food manufacturer).

“There are friends who were doing this business, so they helped me in getting through important and useful marketing tips and vendors so that I can start this business and hire professionals” (RM26, EBay women shoes retailer).

These British Muslim networks are not limited to professional networks that these participants have built. These contacts also come from their friends and family members and help them within the context of social media marketing.

“My mom supports me financially in the business I actually don’t know many people within the community my mom knows more people” (RF21, Amazon Seller B).

In the context of social media and marketing communications, the participants use online ethnic and Muslim groups for brand awareness and business support based on similar belief and value system. For instance, one of the female participants has joined a Facebook British Muslim women entrepreneur’s only group to gain access to members’ professional expertise and experiences.

“They (social media groups) are very good for building business. If you are on a group and you are very active there then you can get more people towards your business. It is always a good option to pick a group of your niche and market there” (RF16, TV Presenter and lifestyle coach).

“I basically do challenges I ask them (Facebook group members) about their biggest (business) fears? and I am the ideal customer persona. So when they tell us then we invite them to come live and I ask other sisters in the community to encourage her and to boost her confidence and support her. After which she post the recorded video of Facebook live on her profile (for everyone to see and gain inspiration)” (RF 22, Motivational speaker).

In addition, participants’ further state the identification of social media group based on similar belief system and shared religious identity including similar target market (British Muslim consumers) is not the only reason for them to join the group. They feel that depending on their business, they can join as many minority or mainstream group since their main target is to acquire potential business support and customers.

“It depends on niche really not particularly being British women so these (Groups) are popular in accordance to niche; I am a part of various groups” (RF16, TV Presenter and lifestyle coach).

Moreover, some of the participants have also utilized their mainstream non-ethnic contacts for business development. They feel that although British Muslim networks are beneficial for their business, they still have work with mainstream groups and companies in order to maximize their network potential and develop competitive edge in the market. As stated by one of the participants,

“I found her (non-ethnic and non-Muslim contact) through a website where you can work with the mentors so I selected her and she reached out to me. She is a marketing specialist and I wanted to excel in marketing. So, she helped me with that and also my website needed some adjustments she fixed them and helped me in getting better in marketing” (RF21, Amazon Seller B).

The second purpose of British Muslim networking for these participants is to gain emotional support that helps them in their daily business activities. This support again comes from friends and family members including their online community as it provides them encouragement and inspiration and feeling that whole community is there to help and guide them on every step of the business.

“My husband pushed me to take my jewellery business more seriously. He supports me all the time and tells me that he would get the website built for me and all” (RF3, Online jewellery supplier).

“On my personal group, every Friday we have a faith reminder so I post verse from Quran about gratitude and thankfulness. So then we ask sisters that what that verse means to them or we share hadith or prophet story showing that everybody has had hardships. So this is how it is there. It is about faith, health and entrepreneurship” (RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).

The interviews of these participants revealed their strong reliance on social media groups based on similar identity and experiences. These online networks allow participants to build emotional support system, which they derive from their shared religious practices. The discussion of *Quranic* verses and hardships faced by Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) inspire these participants and makes them ready and motivated for the struggles ahead in their businesses. Therefore, it can be concluded that the purpose of social media based British Muslim networks is not limited to business collaboration and guidance but it include emotional support that inspire trust among participants based on similar belief system. As stated by one of the participants,

“Ummah (global Islamic community) does not have an ethnic background. It is purely diversified; we are not reaching out to one ethnic group or the other. Ummah means community and it is all about togetherness. Ummah can be a decent from Britain or Spain. It has no colour no creed. We are reaching out to Muslim community. So as long as it connects on the basis of same believes then it can be anybody” (RM13, Digital platform provider).

6.8 Summary

This chapter has dealt with the key findings of the research and indicate that Islamic belief and British culture and values do influence participant’s entrepreneurial business in general and their social media communication activities. The researcher has termed this process as British

Muslim entrepreneurship since participants have indicated that British Muslim belief system and values play a very important role in their day-to-day business activities. The findings also reveal that social factors such as educational qualifications, personal and professional experiences, local cultural dynamics and similar British Muslim background provide participants with an opportunity to identify niche markets and engage customers through social media platforms.

The second theme of the findings discussed the role of social media in the communication activities of participants business in terms of creating brand awareness and customer engagement. The researcher has termed this theme as “*communicating through networks*” approach as participants integrate their social media platforms with offline environments to create brand awareness and engage potential consumers. For instance, at the start of their business, participants use their personalized profiles, blogs and groups on multiple social media networks (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and integrate it with their offline environments to market their products and services. The participants pay more attention to the social media content placement by providing product updates, share positive customer reviews, discuss issues of mutual importance (British Muslim experiences) and post their pictures and videos along with the product to increase their market share. The participants also organize and promote offline events (e.g. Muslim expos, ethnic cultural events) through social media and the contacts they develop in these events increase their social media following and has a positive impact on their product awareness campaigns.

The findings also inform a gender difference among participants when it comes to social media usage. For example, majority of the women participants have shared their views on socio-political issues related to British Muslims in general and British Muslim women in particular on social media as compare to the male participants. These women participants also shared their personal life stories that they believe resonate with their customers and make them feel

like they are part of the same community. The feeling that comes from being part of the same group based on similar religious background and life experience provide women participants with an opportunity to connect with their customer, gain their trust and develop long term relationship. This sort of sharing also provide participants a competitive edge in the market as their customers feel that they are part of the same mind-set based on similar British Muslim belief system and values.

Another communication activity participants employ is the use of social media platforms to identify networking opportunities. The participant's social media networks are not limited to British Muslims but also include people from mainstream population and Muslims living in both Muslim minority and majority countries. The reason behind it is that social media enabled communication technology allow entrepreneurs around the globe to come to gather and work for mutual benefit. However, the research findings also inform that majority of the social media networking still occur between British Muslim entrepreneurs and consumers due to their similar experiences and background. The main objective of these networks is to create brand awareness and identify ways to develop collaborative efforts for mutual business enhancement. As stated by the participants that structural inequalities in the market (due to racism), lack of government support and limited business and digital marketing expertise prompt them to seek help from social media platforms by joining various groups mostly based on British Muslim businesses. These participants also receive help from their friends and family members at the start of their business who offer them with technical digital business support and also provide them with initial customers through their extended online networks.

The participants also use social media networks as a way to resolve their online communication issues by seeking guidance from other group members. These networks provide marketing expertise to the participants, encourage them to undertake collaborate business and marketing efforts and offer them both social and emotional support. The participant also believe that

unsupportive environment created by the government and private sector's lack of interest to help minority business are one of the major factors that encourage them to use these networks for mutual benefits.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the four main research findings (themes) that include British Muslim Entrepreneurship, Communicating through networks, British Muslim marketing, and British Muslim networking. This chapter aims to discuss the main themes presented in the findings chapter in conjunction with the literature review to anchor this study in existing body of knowledge. More specifically, the researcher has identified effectuation theory as a theoretical underpinning to explore and understand how Islamic Belief and British culture influence participant's social media communication activities.

This chapter is divided into four sections based on four themes identified in the findings chapter. The first section has explored the teachings of Islam as experienced by the participants and whether Islamic belief and British cultural values has any influence on their entrepreneurial actions. The second section will explore the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. The third section has analysed whether Islamic belief influences the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. And the last section looks into the communication barriers encounter by the participants and how they are using networking based on British Muslims experiences to resolve it.

7.2 Being British Muslim

As stated in the findings chapter, the participants believe that Islam encourages them to initiate entrepreneurial endeavours for individual and societal benefit. Islamic beliefs and British cultural values provide them with an ethical and moral framework that influence their personal

and business activities. These findings are in accordance with the existing academic literature on religion and its ability to provide ethical and moral framework for its adherent to conduct business activities. However, the participants in this research also acknowledged the influence of their host society culture on their ethical and moral framework. Therefore, one can argue that religion is not the only institution that provide ethical and moral framework to entrepreneurs. Local cultural also has an important role in terms of defining entrepreneur's ethics and morality and formulating its influence on their business.

Bullock (2010) state that *Quran* and *Sunnah* are not the only factors that determine how Muslim perceive themselves. In her view, although there is only one *Quran* but its interpretation is culture-specific and is influenced by one's local environment which in the case of these participants is British.

Meer (2008) further define Muslims in UK in terms of “*quasi-ethnic sociological formation*” (p. 66). In other words, it means that Muslim are not necessarily have to define themselves in terms of religious scripture alone, but they can also identify themselves in terms of locality, ethnicity, political creed and gender. This point of view is in accordance with the findings of this research as participants involved experience who they are in terms their religion and local culture.

In addition, the findings also show that the participants find no difference between Islamic and British values within the context of ethics and morality. They believe that their upbringing in the UK (including the educational system) has taught them the values of freedom of speech, freedom of action, humanism including ethics and morality which guides their day to day business activities. However, they disagree with the notion that Islam does not incorporate freedom of speech and action and view Islam is compatible with British values within the context of ethics and morality.

The view of the participants that Islamic and British cultural values are universal ethical guidelines also negate the generally held perception of British Muslims population in the mainstream media (Zebiri, 2014). For these participants, British Muslim values not only provides them with a sense of collective identity, but the values entrusted in it helps them become best of the both world (east and west) (Zebiri, 2014).

As stated by Zebiri (2014), the age of digital media has also contributed to the development of unique British Muslim belief system and values. She argues that digital media allow individuals to become more self-reflected instead of relying exclusively on religious institutions in terms of interpreting Islam and their place in British society.

Zebiri (2014), further argue that the increase internet penetration and ease of using digital media in the UK has enabled British Muslims to rely on their independent reasoning to acquire religious information as compare to mere following the traditional religious authority. This contrasts with the majority of Muslims living in Islamic world where the reach of internet, english language, and limited political freedom make it difficult for them to acquire alternative understanding of religion and society (2014).

The findings support Zebiri (2014), notion of self- reflect British Muslim entrepreneurs who puts their views on the table rather than quoting someone else's. For instance, many of the research participants have use the phrases such as *"I think, I find, I would, I know, I respect."* These phrases project self-reflection, critical and independent reasoning and freedom of self - expression which can be attributed to British cultural values.

Janmohamed (2016), further argued that this accommodating nature of British Muslim values is not restricted to one's identity but also transcends into their business activities. She further state that British Muslim values are never static and always changing in accordance with the

local environment and modern-day consumer culture. In her book, “*Generation M: Young Muslims Changing the World*” she reveals how one can quickly view the practical application of British Muslim values reflected in entrepreneur’s day to day business operations. One of the examples in her book is about a *Halal* wine and organic *Halal* meat businesses based in the UK that target young British Muslims who want to live their lives in accordance with Islamic principles but at the same time wants to live a healthy and environment friendly lifestyle promoted by modern-day consumer values in the British society.

These findings reflect the point of view of the participants in this research, as they believe that there is no difference between British and Islamic values within the context of ethics and morality and one can easily integrate it in their business activities. In the same line participants business are not limited to identifying and satisfying ethnic and religious consumer’s needs, but it also considers the changing consumer trends in accordance with the local environment (e.g., healthy and environment-friendly consumption as stated in the findings chapter).

The practical aspects of integrating British Muslim values in participants' personal and professional lives support the functional view of religion. This perspective argues that religion is not only about following specific belief system to claim heaven in the hereafter. It also provides its followers the practical guidelines to reinforce social and economic stability in their environment and strengthens collective consciences that differentiates these individuals from other communities and help them move upward in society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

This view can be corroborated by the research participants as they believe that their sense of British Muslimness is not limited to the adherence of British Muslim values alone. It provides these participants the ability to collectively mobilize their social and economic resources (through British Muslim networking as mentioned in the findings chapter) to become a productive part of the society. However, the very same values system that create their unique

identity has the potential to block their advance toward socioeconomic solidarity and bring about various forms of challenges.

As stated by Malinowski (2013), religion can strengthen social solidarity and collective economic advancement. However, at the same time, some religious values have the potential to stop group advancement and help maintain the status quo. Malinowski (2013), provide the example of Christian values of patience and forgiveness that limit followers to raise their voices against oppression so that they would reap its benefits in the hereafter. He argues that die-hard observance of these values keep followers away from achieving socio-economic progress in society and make them perpetrators of self-inflict harm over their future generations.

This argument may help explain some of the reasons why research participants believe they are different than their mainstream entrepreneurial businesses. For example, considering interest rate as un-Islamic makes it difficult for these participants to retain financial flexibility. At the same time, the prohibition of alcohol and gambling limit their business options and keep them into specific industries. The participants also believe that they are more Islamic oriented and follow ethics and moral values as compared to the Muslims living in the Muslim majority countries. This form of heightened ethnic and religious identity based on ethical and moral values support previous research on ethnic identity politics among minorities living in the west (Yiyuan, 2015).

In addition, the current political situation (refugees crisis in Europe and the international war on terror) have negative implications for British Muslim entrepreneurs since they believe that the mainstream population view them as the “Other” that limit their prospects for socio-economic progress. Meer (2008), takes this argument further by adding that “*Muslim identity has not existed in a social and political vacuum in Britain, but has instead been shaped in dialogue with its context*” (p.65). These context include high profile events such as 9/11 and

7/7 bombings in London accompanied by the negative projection of British Muslims by mainstream media that pushed diversified Muslim ethnicity in the UK to finally consider them as a single community based on the observance of common religion instead of ethnicity or political beliefs (Zimmerman, 2014). Therefore, one can argue that these religious values and socio-political environment may limit them to participate fully in the British society, but at the same time, it provides them with conscious awareness of their identity as British Muslim and make them feel that are different from the mainstream population.

At present, the researcher has identified British Muslim beliefs and values as an important factor that determine participant's sense of who they are in relation to their personal and business lives. This idea is supported by Sarasvathy (2005; 2001), as she stated that entrepreneurs learn from their sense of self, experiences and use only those resources which they can control and make sense of. Sarasvathy (2001), termed this kind of thinking as an effectuation entrepreneurship perspective which take into account who is the entrepreneur what they know (personal experiences), whom they know (social network). The objective here is to use all available resources at hand and make it work for one's business growth.

The proposition that personal experience, individual belief system, and life history has the potential to influence entrepreneurial actions (Sarasvathy 2005; 2001) is quite general and do not provide specific explanation regarding how entrepreneurs view who they are in relation to their business. Nielsen and Lassen (2012), have proposed that what entrepreneurs know, in other words, their entrepreneurial identity is the result of their personal experience and life history, which is derived from their educational and family institutions. However, there is lack of academic literature on how an entrepreneur's individual belief system and values influence their sense of who they are and its implications on their business and communication activities. Therefore, the researcher in this study has attempted to extend effectuation theory within the context of "*who is the entrepreneurs*" by adding their religious beliefs (Islam) and local

cultural (British) values. As the participants have indicated that they derive their entrepreneurial or business values from their religion and the British society.

In this section, the researcher has discussed that the individual belief system of the entrepreneurs and how they integrate their religion and local culture. Table 7.1 shows the key themes identified in the literature review and how they findings further extend previous research. The next section has explored how participants identify business opportunities and segment their consumers.

No	Existing Research	Being British Muslims (Findings)
1	Religion encourage individuals to work for individual and societal benefit.	Islam encourage participants to work for individual and societal benefit.
2	Religion provide ethical and moral framework to ethnic entrepreneurs to conduct business activities.	Islam and mainstream culture provide ethical and moral framework to conduct business activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants find no difference between Islam and British Cultural values. • Participants consider ethics and moral framework as universal.
3	Integrating religion with local culture within the context of identity.	Integrating Islam and British culture within the context of entrepreneurial actions.
4	Effectuation theory vaguely consider who is the entrepreneur (individual general belief system) influence their entrepreneurial actions.	This research extends effectuation theory by adding religious beliefs of the entrepreneur can influence their entrepreneurial actions.

Table 7.1: Comparison of literature review with research findings.

7.2.1 Being British Muslim entrepreneur

Market identification

Previous academic literature on ethnic entrepreneurship has discussed the Push and Pull factors among ethnic businesses. As stated in the literature review section, ethnic entrepreneurs are generally pushed into entrepreneurship due to low level of education, inability to integrate with the mainstream population and inequality present in opportunity structures in society (Jamal, *et al* 2015). On the other hand, Pushed theory suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs who are born, bred and educated in the host society have more chances to consider self-employment opportunities due to their ability to integrate with the mainstream population and their potential to identify and take advantage of existing business opportunities (McPherson, 2010; 2007).

The findings of this research support the Pull theory since all of the participants interviewed said that they are not pushed into their current businesses but started their business due to their ability to identify niche markets based on their personal interests, education, and skill set, and ability to recognize opportunity through similar ethnic and religious experiences.

The identification of the market based on one's personal experiences and interests contradicts the customer-oriented approach in mainstream marketing and paves the way for innovation-oriented mindset proposed by Stokes (2000). He argued that mainstream marketers conduct market research based on their potential consumers to identify and satisfy their needs. On the other hand, entrepreneurs "*tend to start with an idea, and then try to find a market for it.*" (Stokes, 2000, p. 7). The innovation-oriented approach proposed by Stokes (2000) is in line with the research findings as all of the participants stated that their business idea compelled them to start their business instead of prior extensive research on their potential market. These

research findings also support Saravathy (2001), effectuation entrepreneurial perspective which state that the establishment of entrepreneurial business depends on the resources which the entrepreneur control in the form of personal experience, education and skill set. She also argue that it is the business idea instead of extensive prior research that led to the formation and development of market opportunities.

In addition, the participants are not restricting themselves to specific ethnic-oriented businesses such as grocery stores, transportation, and takeaways (details regarding participants businesses are mentioned in the methodology chapter). Social media provides them the opportunity to materialize their business ideas in accordance with their interest and current market trends. The breaking out of ethnic entrepreneurs in non-ethnic businesses is in line with (Anwar & Daniel, 2016) who consider digital media and education as one of the main reasons that provide ethnic business in the UK the opportunities to look beyond traditional businesses.

Previous research also shows that ethnic entrepreneurs are breaking out into the mainstream market by selling mainstream products or by marketing ethnic products as exotic products to the mainstream population (Jamal, 2012). However, majority of these participants in this research are still targeting ethnic and Muslim markets. The reason behind it is the ability of these participants to identify unfulfilled needs of these markets, which are even ignored by traditional ethnic businesses as they failed to transform their business in accordance changing consumer attitudes in an emerging technological environment. For stance, six of the participants in this research are in e-retail businesses and argue that nowadays, young ethnic consumers are increasingly using social media and digital platforms such as eBay and Amazon to buy products. The change in ethnic consumption habits due to the technological changes

gives participants a competitive edge over traditional ethnic retailers that have no online presence and lack digital technical expertise.

Moreover, growing number of the participants in this study are targeting Muslim consumers in other Muslim minority and majority countries (through social media) which helps them increase their market size without the need of moving towards local mainstream consumers. For example, one of the participants stated that she has expanded her market base from British Muslims to North American Muslims consumer by opening her delivery office in USA. There are other participants' mainly motivational speakers and lifestyle coaches who regularly travel to the Middle East and Europe and organize events to cater the audiences outside the UK.

These findings challenge existing ethnic research that argue that ethnic businesses start with their ethnic market but tend to move into the mainstream market by selling non-ethnic products and services (Jamal *et al.*, 2015). The participants in this research start with ethnic or religious oriented products and then spread out to other Muslim markets in Europe, North America and the Middle East due to the digital nature of their business. The participants also sell the same products and services to the mainstream market and the only change they make is in their communication strategy that is in line with both ethnic and mainstream consumer trends (British Muslim values). For example, some of the female lifestyle coaches in this research talk about women empowerment and work-life balance in their coaching classes. As they believe that these issue are not limited to ethnic and Muslim women but also experienced by the mainstream female Caucasians. The same goes for three halal-meat retailers in this research, as they advertise their product as *Halal* for Muslim consumers but at the same time brand it as nutritious and balanced diet package meals for the health conscious mainstream population.

In this section, the researcher has presented the reasons which led participants to form their entrepreneurial businesses. These reasons include their personal experiences, interest, and education and skill-set that help them generate business ideas and the use of social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and snapchat provide them the opportunity to identify consumer markets both locally and globally. This section also discussed that although the participants are breaking out of the traditional ethnic businesses (e.g., takeaways, taxi, etc.) but they are mainly limiting themselves in their ethnic and religious communities (Muslim consumers). The reason behind it is that social media has extended their global reach to ethnic and Muslim consumers in other countries as well since their target market is still not saturated. The ability of the participants to identify and segment their target market is further discussed in the next section below.

Consumer Segmentation

In their initial business years, participants tend to serve the needs of few consumers in their surroundings and later expand their reach gradually as they gain further experiences and resources. This form of marketing strategy enabled them to identify which market segment is more in line with their products and services and provided them the ability target and position their products and services in accordance with their selected consumer segments. This bottom-up approach is in direct opposition to top-down approach prevalent in mainstream marketing where organizations are involved in segmentation, targeting and then positioning of their offerings based on market research (Stokes, 2000). The bottom-up approach is also supported by effectuation entrepreneur's perspective presented by Sarasvathy (2005), who argue that at the start-up stage, entrepreneurs seek feedback from their immediate surroundings (e.g., friends, family, early customers) and that particular assessment led entrepreneurs to make changes in their product development and communication activities.

The process of bottom-up approach led the participants to segment the market based on various consumer markets, which include Muslim market, lifestyle niche, ethnic consumer segment, and the mainstream market. These research findings are in accordance with *Jamal et al. (2015)* and Jamal (2005, 2003), and reaffirm that some ethnic businesses are using their own ethnic and religious communities to market their products and services. This analysis is also in accordance with *Nwankwo et al., (1998)*, as they point out ethnic communities are unique due to their cultural and religious difference, and marketers should consider these differences to develop effective segmentation strategies. Therefore, what make these participants different from their predecessors is their view of business that is not limited to selling alone but also consider the religious and cultural values they want to promote through their business.

For example, one of the participants who sell halal ready to eat meal target young professional British Muslims. He states that their target market desire halal products but in accordance with the prevalent social trends in the British society that focuses on nutritious and balanced diet and healthy living. As they believe, that healthy living is not only a British cultural value but also promoted by their religious beliefs. Therefore the company brand their packaging as healthy ready to eat meals which they claim are in line with the changing needs of professional young Muslims and are in accordance with British and Islamic ethical values.

The incorporation of emerging social trends (e.g., healthy lifestyle) along with the notion of Halal indicate the changing consumer behaviour among young British Muslims. The participants believe that unlike their parent generation (for whom *Halal* was the enough reason to buy products), young British Muslim consumer have more expectations from the market. For these consumers, the word halal is not limited to certain way to slaughter an animal. It is also about providing healthy and ethical products and services for their physical and moral development. For instance, one of the participant's companies packaging communicate a

message of, healthy and low-fat ingredients in the meals and focus less on the notion of the word “*Halal*” and emphasize more on the ethical side of the business. This segmentation strategy contradicts previous ethnic marketing research, which emphasize the mentioning of *Halal* words as the main communication strategy to target customers.

The participants stated that digital media and Islamic Belief and British cultural values have cultivated these new ideas among British Muslims and reconfigure their consumer identity in accordance with their environment. Therefore, the notion of *Halal* is no longer the only strategy for the marketers to segment their market. The businesses have to understand how local cultural dynamics and religious beliefs of the British Muslims are shaping consumer identity and creating new market opportunities. Thus, the amalgamation of religious beliefs with local cultural factors indicate an emerging segmentation and positioning strategy incorporated by the participants.

The identification of a target markets based on emerging social trends is unique among ethnic business. Previous research on ethnic entrepreneurship has discussed ethnic business formation and identification of the target market based on similar community or religious experiences (Jaffary, 2014). However, this new trend suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs are also utilizing emerging social trends from their local environment as part of their segmentation strategy. However, as stated by the participants, their main target market is still ethnic consumers, and they identify such niche markets within their ethnic segment. This line of thought is also pointed out by (Zúñiga & Torres,2015) as they argue that each consumer (ethnic) market segment differs in culture, language usage, values, ideologies, preferences, customs, historical perspectives, and consumption behaviour and marketers must understand these differences in order to create effective market segmentation strategies.

In addition, the integration between local social trends and ethnic belief system reveal how the participants as entrepreneurs are embedding into the host society as manifested in their segmentation strategy. This view of in accordance with the mixed embedded theory proposed by Kloosterman, (2010) and further endorsed by Ram *et al* (2017), as they argue that there is more academic emphasis on ethnic resources and its impact on immigrant businesses instead of institutional agents such as government regulations, gender, racism and historical market context which include ethnic entrepreneurs social relationship with the host society. In this study, the researcher has attempted to argue that institutional agents such as religion and mainstream cultural values can influence ethnic entrepreneurial business activities. Table 7.2 shows the key themes identified in the literature review and how the findings mentioned in this section further extend previous research.

Existing research	Being British Muslim entrepreneurs (findings)
Ethnic entrepreneurs are pushed & pulled into entrepreneurship.	British Muslim entrepreneurs are pulled into entrepreneurship.
effectuation theory suggest that Establishment of entrepreneurial business depends on entrepreneur's personal resources (ethnic and religious).	findings extend Effectuation theory by adding that Establishment of entrepreneurial business depends not only upon entrepreneurs ethnic and religious resources but also their mainstream resources.
Identification of market based on ethnicity, religion and mainstream population.	Identification of market based on integration of religion and mainstream culture (social trends).
Consumer segmentation based on ethnic, religious and mainstream consumer needs.	Consumer segmentation based on Muslim, mainstream, ethnic and sustainability and health conscious markets.
Ethnic entrepreneurs are limited to specific industries (transportation, grocery stores, takeaways, accountancy firms).	Participants are entering non-ethnic industries (e.g. online retail etc) due to social media platforms.

Ethnic entrepreneurs start with their ethnicity and religion but LATER BREAK out into mainstream market.	Participants remain in local ethnic market and breakout to global ethnic and Muslim markets.
ethnic consumers wants products and services in line with their ethnicity and religion.	Participants state that their consumers wants products and services in accordance with Islamic participants and British cultural trends.
product marketing by using religious symbols (e.g. <i>halal</i>) is enough to market products.	Marketing products as <i>halal</i> only is not enough. one has to incorporate its essence along with local cultural trends.
Ethnic entrepreneurs market ethnic products as exotic products to mainstream market.	Participants market ethnic products in accordance with local cultural trends to mainstream market.

Table 7.2: Key themes in Being British Muslim entrepreneurs section.

7.3 Communications through Networking

In this theme, the researcher has discussed the social media communication activities participants are using to identify and engage customers. The section has highlighted the importance of social media platforms and the networking dimension involve in it which provide these participants the opportunity to identify markets and engage customers.

7.3.1 Importance of social media Platforms

During the fieldwork, the participants considered Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat as one of the most popular social media platforms to conduct their online businesses. They believe that social media platforms are increasingly enabling them to identify niche market (ethnic) segments. In the early stages of their business, the participants use social media platforms to

advertise their products and gauge customer's reactions (market research). This exercise allows them to identify their potential niche markets and create products and communication messages in accordance with current market trends.

The low cost, easy to use social media platforms (convenience) and the ability to reach consumers instantly (brand awareness) are the main reasons for the growing popularity of social media platforms among participants. However, the research also observed that participants (especially women) are using social media platforms to create work-life balance as it allow them to work from home and be with their family. Working from home due to Social media also enable women participants to stay away from the racism which they believe is prevalent in the traditional job market and also provide them the opportunity to counter the negative image of Muslims in mainstream media through their products and services.

These findings are in line with previous research that indicate that the social media facilitate businesses to identify and engage niche markets (Kaplan, 2012), due to its low cost, ability to conduct market research (Qualman, 2012), and two-way communications (Jagongo & Kinyua (2013). Moreover, Anwar and Michele (2016), also stated that ethnic entrepreneurs are increasingly using social media for marketing their businesses and creating work-life balance.

These research findings also supported by Sarasvathy (2001), effectual process among entrepreneurs since it allows them to use only those resources which they have or they can afford to increase brand awareness. The low cost of social media network allows the research participants to create their business profiles online (at any time and stage in business) and use social media analytics to identify and engage potential customers. The participants also use social media to interact with customers, and the feedback they receive from them help them

make changes in all aspects of their business. This is supported by Dew *et al.*, (2008), as they argue that entrepreneurial actions are not static and changes as entrepreneur interact with their customer.

7.3.2 Social media Profiles

One of the main communication activities used by the participants on social media is the creation and maintenance of social media profiles. The participants personalize their social media pages to share their individual stories with the customers to build relationships. They conduct self-promotional activities (act as Brand ambassadors) for product awareness and use social media analytical tools to identify and engage potential customers. They also use their social media pages to promote social causes, which create a positive image of the brand in the minds of the customers. The integration of product communication along with the promotion of social causes makes the participants feel they are adhering to Islamic beliefs and British cultural values by using their brands as a way to make a positive difference in society.

The above-mentioned communication activities are in accordance with previous research that suggest that ethnic entrepreneurs are increasingly using social media pages to market their products and services (Anwar & Micheele, 2016). Nevertheless, this research extend ethnic marketing literature by incorporating social cause communications as part of the ethnic marketing mix.

The participants have stated that there is no difference between their personal and business accounts on social media. They believe that their business offerings are an extension of their personal interests and belief system. Therefore, these social media profiles or pages help them communicate their interest and values through their products and services. The communication

of one's interest and values through ones products help both the participants and the customer to identify with the business not just in terms of satisfying their material needs but make them feel like they are part of the community that share common values and life experiences (British Muslims).

This form of communication helps participants to create a competitive edge in the market and develop long-lasting relationships as they share and learn from each other experiences. This form of personal marketing contradicts the traditional impersonal view of product promotion that urges marketers to keep their personal feelings or belief system from the brand itself (Kotler, 2015). It also negate one-way communication portrayed by personality marketing that takes the brand to un-human level that limit customer ability to relate with it (Kotler, 2015).

Moreover, the paid and non-paid communication activities (social media insights) provide these businesses the ability to conduct market research and the opportunity to identify and engage potential customers based on unique keywords and life experiences. Some of these services are free such as using *social media search boxes* to find target market by using keywords and join groups based on similar interests. However, there are other paid sophisticated tools on social media that allow participants to advertise their brands directly on the profiles of potential customers. For instance, one of the participants (Online sportswear business) have stated that paid advertising enabled her to advertise on the social media pages of those individuals who have mentioned keywords such as Hiking, Gym, football as their interest on their digital profiles.

Another participant has stated that social media insights provides rich customer data in the form of how many of customers liked, commented and shared her content on social media. This form of feedback on a daily basis help participants to create and structure social media content which is in line with customer needs and measure the effectiveness of their communications. These findings are supported by Wedel and Kannan (2016) Jagongo and

Kinyua (2013) and Yadav *et al.*, (2015) who argue that entrepreneurs are using social media to develop a rich customer database that enables them to enhance the quality of customer relationships through their active feedback mechanism.

Moreover, participants' use of their social media pages to promote social causes along with their products and services is in line with the research related to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social marketing (Gümüşay,2014). However, the findings also indicate that these participants are cultural sensitive and promote only those social causes, which are in line with their British Muslim socio-political context. For example, many of the participants have promoted social causes such as justice for Palestine people, food drive to help people around the globe and using their digital business profile as a way to create a soft and positive image of their identity as Muslims.

This form of CSR marketing support Christ and Brian (2014) who believe that cultural sensitivity in marketing allow marketers to create more intimate relationship with their customers based on mutual trust and shared experiences. Also, majority of the participants provide sale or giveaways during Islamic and British cultural events in the form of Ramadan, Eid, Christmas, New Year, etc. These participants believe that these events provide them with an opportunity to engage their customers and foster one –one communication.

One of the growing trends among participants is the strategic use of social media groups as part of their communication activities. The participants identify and join social media groups, which are both in line with their personal and professional lives. These online networks provide participants a communication platform to market their products and individual beliefs system and to receive feedback from both other businesses and potential consumers. Majority of these groups joined by the participants are based on shared British Muslim values and provide members a sense of community and identity as British Muslims that share similar life

experiences. The social capital exists in these groups allow participants to gain business guidance and support including personal lifestyle advises.

These findings are in line with Smith *et al.* (2017), who claim that entrepreneurs are using social media to accrue social capital that enable them to remain competitive in the market. Quinton and Wilson (2016), further ads that social media has changed the way businesses build digital networks and collaborate to gain organizational objectives. At present, the research on online networking and collaboration among businesses has only focused on the common business interests that bring them together (Quinton & Wilson, 2016). However, this research shows that similar religion and local cultural context (British Muslim background) is another factor that has the potential to create and foster business networking and collaboration opportunities on social media.

Fischer and Reuber (2011), further supported the idea that community orientation and community norms are two emerging constructs that can positively influence social interactions on social media and leads entrepreneurs to advance through effectual process.

This development of participants community based on British Muslim values and experiences negate previous research on ethnic marketing that suggest that ethnicities only use their communities for networking and business collaboration. The findings of this research indicate that participant's business networking and collaboration on social media is not limited to their ethnicities in the UK but also include both Muslims and non-Muslims who share common British values around the globe. During the interviews, participants have stated that social media groups allow them to interact and collaborate with both Muslims and non-Muslim customers and fellow businesses. This form of networking based on shared British and Muslim values create inclusive environment and allow businesses to grow and prosper by pursuing same vision.

Another communication strategy used by participants include posting of questions on social media groups, liking, commenting and sharing each other posts on social media groups. These activities allow participants to interact and engage potential customers in order to gain customer insights and advertise their products and services. This communication strategy helps participants to raise brand awareness and increase the flow of word of mouth among group members. Smith *et al.* (2017) also inform the use of likes, comment, and sharing strategy, as they argue that such strategy enable entrepreneurs to develop close relationships with customers and help them create a competitive edge in the market.

7.3.3 Content Marketing

Content marketing is one of the integral part of research participants' communication activities on social media. This form of communication activity include updating customers about ones products and services by writing it on participants personal and business pages and sharing it within online social groups. Majority of the participants also share and re-tweet customer reviews, promote altruistic actions (social causes), provide sales and giveaways on British Muslim cultural events and some participants write blogs as well which they later share it on their social media pages.

These communication activities mentioned above are in line with previous academic research that advocate the use of customer reviews, altruistic actions, blogs and regular product update as an important part of the social media communication activities (Lee *et al.*, 2018; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). These communication activities allow participants to link their blogs and

customer reviews with their social media pages and increase *SEO* friendliness (Swani *et al.*, 2014).

In addition, participants have also discussed the importance of relevancy when writing content for the customers. They claim that the social media content should not be limited to the functional consumer needs but also be accompanied by emotional appeal based on similar religious and local cultural experiences. For instance, participants use their blogs to not only discuss their products and services but also discuss and debate socio-economic issues faced by their British Muslim customers. Current academic literature has discussed the importance of emotional appeal within the context of social media marketing (Iankova *et al.*, 2018; Swani *et al.*, 2017). However, the findings in this research extend current academic research on content marketing by adding similar religious and local cultural experiences as one of the important factors that has the potential to increase customer engagement.

Moreover, the participants also create and share ethnic, local cultural, and religious content on their social media pages. The integration of one's ethnic, religious and local cultural resources shows how their individual belief system and values influence their content strategy. These findings are in line with Penaloza (2018, 1994, &1999) as she argues that ethnic marketing allow both businesses and consumers to negotiate their marketing practices in accordance with their socio-economic context and marketplace. These findings further support Lee *et al.*, (2018) who argue that persuasive content that projects human emotions has a positive impact on customer engagement.

Elliot *et al.*, (2018) further support this process among the businesses by arguing that ethnic entrepreneurs experience their ethnicity and religion and reflect upon it in accordance with the local social context and individual belief system and values. This self-reflective process allows

the ethnic entrepreneurs to form abstract conceptualization of their products that incorporate both ethnic and mainstream cultural elements. The participants in this research re-affirm Elliot *et al.* (2018), as they also develop their content strategy in line with their British Muslim experiences.

The participant's content strategy incorporates inspirational stories, motivational quotes based on British Muslim values to engage customers and create a competitive edge in the market.

These findings further support Chan and Astari (2018), as they argue that organizational characteristics and values play a very important role in customer engagement. They state that one can start off by sharing content which is relevant with consumer needs. But later on it has to be accompanied by organizational values, characteristics and personal experiences in order to make the consumer feel that they are not speaking with organization but actual people behind it who have the same beliefs, values and life experiences as their customers.

In this section, the researcher has attempted to discuss the importance of social media platforms and identified key communication activities employed by the participants. The researcher has also showed that participants market their products and services through social media profiles including groups and by incorporate multiple online channels approach and integrating it with offline environments. The content they use is highly influenced by their unique British Muslim experiences. In the next theme, the researcher will further explain how Islamic beliefs and British cultural values influence the communication activities of the participants. Table 7.3 shows the key themes identified in the literature review and how the findings mentioned in this section further extend previous research.

No	Existing Research	Communication through networks (Findings)
1	Effectuation theory suggest that community orientation and community norms including similar professional experiences influence entrepreneurs' social media networking in terms of market identification and customer engagement.	This research extends effectuation theory by adding community orientation and norms based on similar British Muslim experiences influence entrepreneurs' social media networking in terms of market identification and customer engagement.
2	Ethnic entrepreneurs networking only involved similar ethnic and religious communities.	Participants social media networking also involved mainstream contacts due to similar local culture(British).
3	Entrepreneurs use emotional content to engage customers on social media platforms.	Participants use religious and local cultural content to engage customers.

Table 7.3: Key themes in Communicating through networks section

7.4 British Muslim Communications

As stated by Cruz *et al.* (2018), religion has the potential to influence both online and offline multicultural marketplaces. This is also evident in this research where the participant's Islamic belief system is manifested in their social media communication activities. These beliefs are the by-product of both ethnic religion and mainstream culture and mediated through various social institutions. The findings reveal how one of these social institution (Islam) influence participant's social media communication activities.

The communication activities of the research participants are based on universal ethical and moral values derived from their religion (Islam) and local (British) culture. The participants believe that it is their responsibility as British Muslims to live a virtuous life by remaining faithful to the moral and ethical standards set by Islam and the British society for collective benefit. For these participants, there is no contradiction between Islamic and British values since they consider them as part of the universal values. The depiction of these moral and ethical standards is evident in the social media communication activities of the participants that emphasize truthfulness in product promotion, fair play and underscore the value of fairness during customer interaction.

In addition, the participants also believed that incorporation of ethics and morality as part of the communication activities is not only a religious or cultural (British) obligation. They state that modern-day marketplace in which customers have power over the marketer (due to social media) requires them to follow ethics and morality in order to succeed. Therefore, they believe it is only logical and prudent for them to remain truthful and fair with their customers otherwise they will not be able to prosper in their business. These findings are in line with (Tuten & Solomon, 2014) who argue that revolution in digital technologies resulted in democratization of communications has taken the marketing power from the businesses and give it to the consumers.

According to El-Bassiouny, (2016) Islamic marketing literature discusses the role of Islam on businesses in general and marketing. She further state that previous studies consider Islam as a static religion, which cannot be influenced by globalization and changes in digital communicational technologies. However, the new age of globalization and digital network society has the potential to articulate and re-configure Islamic identity and Muslim consumption practices (2016). As stated by Jaffer (2012), one should not consider Islam as a reductionist ideology but a belief system that can evolve in line with core Islamic beliefs and changing global dynamics.

The findings in this research extend this view in a sense that they portray the interplay between Islam and the mainstream culture and how participants are manifesting these interactions in their social media communication activities. Here, the virtual marketplace comes as another factor that provide logical and business-oriented justification to the use of ethics and morality in their business. Therefore, one can assume that it is not only Islam and British values, but there are also social media marketplace factors that influence their communication activities.

7.4.1 Islamic Orientation (*Neeya* and *Dawah*)

During the fieldwork, majority of the participants discussed the role of Islamic *Neeya* (Intention) and *Dawah* (promotion of Islamic teachings for conversion) in their communication activities. However, the participants stated that they do share Islamic quotations and *Quranic* verses on social media, but their intention here is not to convert their customers to Islam. On the contrary, they believe that they use their religious belief system to motivate their customers and create a positive image of Islam in their minds.

The elements of motivating customers and creating a positive image of Islam are different from the traditional notion of Islamic *Dawah*. In a conventional sense, the main objective of *Dawah* is to preach Islamic beliefs to both Muslims and non-Muslims with the intention of conversion. However, in this research participants believe that they have no right to tell people what and how to live their life (British value). However, for these participants, *Quranic* verses and Islamic quotations (they share on social media) from Prophet *Muhammad* and his followers provides them the ability to remain committed in front of personal and professional obstacles. It also makes the participants feel that there is someone all-powerful and almighty who will show them the light as long as they remain steadfast to his commands. Therefore, these participants believe that promotion of religious beliefs will also help their customers to cope up with issues they face in their daily and business lives and keep them closer to God.

The use of social media communications as socially and spiritually responsible mechanism to create a positive difference in the lives of one's customer is different than the traditional forms of business communications that emphasize sales and customer value. Here the role of

communications is not limited to providing material value to the customer but also allowing them to acquire spiritual value that would help them resolve their internal confrontations and transcendental cravings. These findings are in line with Temporal (2011), who argue that Islamic communication process requires customers to embrace Islamic values as part of their consumer identity in order to get more closer to God and achieve both materialistic and spiritual success (Temporal, 2011). Nevertheless, restricting the interpretation of Dawah for spiritual motivation and guidance alone and at the same time valuing one's right of opinion while respecting each other belief system may be considered as the by-product of British values based on individualism and promotion of multiculturalism (Zebri, 2014).

7.4.2 Modesty

One of the foremost elements of the communication activities of participants on social media is the value of modesty. All the participants believe that modesty is a critical aspect of Islam and as Muslims, they are required to be modest in their personal and professional lives. Therefore, one can easily identify this particular value in their communication activities on social media. For instances, one of the shoe retailer in this study said that he only show the feats of his models on social media. Other male and female participants only put their pictures online with their products in which they are physically covered.

For these participants, the idea of modesty is not limited to physical covering of the self. It also means not exaggerating ones product claims on social media and remaining true to oneself. As stated by one of the participants modesty teaches you to be honest in your customer interaction approach and being true to oneself. It informs your customers that you mind-set is grounded in Islam which directly and indirectly makes them feel connected with their offerings.

These findings regarding physical modestly are in line with Jamal & Shukor (2014), as they argue that young British Muslim consumers are looking for modest fashion when they are

buying clothes in the mainstream market. However, they limited the definition of modesty for British Muslim women physically covering themselves. They also find out that highly acculturated British Muslims are gradually moving and adjusting themselves towards “*an entrenched British-Muslim consumer subculture in the UK and hence are acculturating an important aspect of their sub-cultural group*”(p.243). Therefore, companies has to understand the cultural and religious needs of their customers before formalizing communications strategies.

The idea of showing modesty in women fashion is also supported by Sandiki and Gur (2010) as they argue that Muslim fashion –retail business in Turkey are increasingly projecting modesty as part of their communication strategy. Zain *et al.*, (2018) has conducted a study of Generation Y consumers in Malaysia. Their findings reveal that their respondents are increasingly mix and match Islamic and Western style of dress in order to create innovative clothing styles that enable them to follow western fashion trends and complement it with Malaysian traditions while paying respect to the Islamic norms. However, this study extend the definition of modesty by stating that modesty is not limited to physically covering oneself or the product. Modesty is also about to remain honest with the product claims and remaining true to oneself and the customers.

7.4.3 Influence of Cultural values (Ethnic and British)

As stated in the findings, participants find no difference between their ethnic and British cultural values. They believe that it is their family and the educational system, which instil in them the value of hard work, trust, family values, respect, tolerance, individualism, gender equality and believing in oneself. Majority of the participants incorporate these values in the social media communications and their interaction with customers.

These findings are in line with Waldinger *et al.*, (1990) as they emphasize the role of cultural values such as hard work, trust, family, respect and tolerance on their marketing activities. Altinay & Altinay, (2008) and McPherson (2007) further stated that these cultural values have the potential to influence customer relationship management among ethnic entrepreneurs positively.

Anwar and Daniel (2015), suggested that cultural resources in the form of extended family and ethnic networks provide a competitive edge to the ethnic marketer in terms of market identification and customer engagement in an online environment. They specifically discussed the role of family and ethnic networks as they recommend participants to potential customers by using both online and offline media. Anwar and Daniel (2016), further stated that friends and family of the entrepreneurs provide them both technical and non-technical knowledge to understand how they can use digital media to increase brand awareness and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

In this research, participants have turned their cultural capital into a communication activity by sharing culturally influenced stories of their personal and family struggles, and how cultural values helped them grow personally and professionally on social media websites. The main objective of these stories is to inspire and motivate customers and develop a community based on similar cultural values and life experiences. The act of sharing one's personal experiences might expose participant's vulnerabilities, but at the same time, it allows them to gain customer trust, which they believe, result in a long-term relationship. These findings are supported by Christ and Brian (2014), as they argue that cultural sensitivity provides marketers the opportunity to develop intimate relationships with their customers based on mutual trust and shared experiences.

In addition, the findings also highlight an emerging trend among female participants regarding the use of social media for both business communications and self-expression purposes. Majority of the female participants discuss and debate gender disparity and women empowerment issues with their customers and encourage each other to become free from societal pressures and speak their minds.

During these discussions, the participants and their customers identify themselves as British Muslim women and express their views and beliefs about the socio-economic position of British Muslims in general and women in particular. These online communities of the participants on social media provide them with a sense of community and an obligation to take part in the discussion for both personal and collective benefit. These findings are supported by Zebiri (2014) as she states that the emergence of digital media has provided British Muslim women a platform for self-expression and network development for the mutual benefit based on similar life experiences.

In addition, as stated by Read et al. (2009) Effectuation theory suggest that entrepreneurs use their own personal and professional experiences or in other words analogical reasoning to make marketing decisions. However, it does not discuss those personal and professional experiences in detail. Therefore, the research findings in this section extend effectuation theory within the context of marketing by stating that entrepreneurial individual belief system and local cultural context has the potential to influence entrepreneur sense of self (who is the entrepreneur) and that sense of self can influence entrepreneurial social media communication activities.

Moreover, the use of social media pages for both business communications and sharing of cultural and Islamic values for communal benefit is in line with the conceptual paper written by Penaloza (2018). As she argues that ethnic marketing is not just about identifying and satisfying ethnic consumer needs. However, it is also about giving a sense of community and

identity to both consumers and ethnic business. The participants in this research empirically confirm Penaloza (2018) proposition as they believe that social media business communications are not just about selling products and services, but it also enables them (British Muslim) to be part of a mainstream community based on British Muslim beliefs system and shared life experiences.

However, the idea of ethnic marketing as a way to normalize ethnicities into the mainstream society is contested by (Veresiu & Giesler 2018). They argue that there are institutional factors such as market-mediated neoliberal multiculturalism that reduce ethnicities to the mainstream market, instead of making it part of the social and cultural fabric of the overall society. Kymlicka (2015), defines neoliberal multiculturalism as *“the equal right of all to market themselves and their culture, and to safely consume the cultural products of others, indifferent to issues of disadvantage (p.7)*. In other words, the promotion of ethnic products depicts ethnicities as commodities instead of living entities who are only to be consumed by the mainstream population rather than to be engaging them as a democratic citizen and learn from each belief systems and unique experiences (Veresiu & Giesler 2018).

In the current neo-liberal global dynamics ethnicity is not understood as a collective political way to express group insecurities and their demands over economic, cultural, religious, structural and social inequalities (Bell, 1975). Nowadays, the socio-economic demands of ethnic groups are projected through their consumption identity politics in the form of styles, aesthetics, and decisions made in the marketplace; Ahmed 2000; Bouchet 1995; Firat 1995). Hence, recent identity politics has become the political mobilization of ethnicities by acting as a marketable good. As stated by Žižek (1997), *“contemporary identity politics, far from challenging colonial and market hegemony, actually serves to support it by removing the focal*

point of political action from systemic exploitation and inequality to minority rights and marketplace inclusion”(p.264).

The participants also confirmed the thesis presented by Zizek (1997), as they believe that the inclusion of ethnic businesses in the mainstream market will resolve systematic political exploitation and inequality in their community. However, they must take into account that ethnic marketing can only allow them to compete in the marketplace, but it can never allow them to come into the social and political arena of the mainstream society to resolve their issues (Veresiu & Giesler 2018). Table 7.4 shows the key themes identified in the literature review and how the findings mentioned in this section further extend previous research.

Existing Research	British Muslim Communications (Findings)
Lack of research on the influence of religion on ethnic entrepreneurs marketing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings indicate that participants religion and mainstream culture influence their social media communication activities. • Participants consider it their duty that the communication activities they use on social media platforms should be in accordance their religious believes and local cultural values. • Participants share Quranic verses and local cultural inspirations quotes and stories to engage customers. • Participants also share culturally influenced stories of their personal and family struggles, and how cultural values (hard work, persistency, family values) helped them grow personally and professionally on social media websites. • The main objective of these stories is to inspire and motivate customers and develop a community based on similar cultural values and life experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants believe that it is their responsibility as British Muslims to not just satisfy customers materialistic needs but also their spiritual needs.
Ethnic entrepreneurship research state Muslim entrepreneurs physically cover female and male models while marketing their products and services as they believe it is in accordance with Islam (Modesty).	Participants believe that Modesty is not just about physically covering oneself, but it is also about not exaggerating product claims and remaining true to oneself and customers.
Lack of research within effectuation theory with regard to the influence of social institution on the marketing activities of entrepreneurs.	This research extend effectuation theory by identifying religion (Islam) and British culture as two institutions that has the ability to influence entrepreneurial marketing activities.

Table 7.4: Key themes in British Muslim communications section.

7.4.4 British Muslim Networking

One of the main communication issues the participants encounter is lack of social media expertise. They believe that the government is not doing enough to encourage minority businesses that result in their inability to gain professional development. Therefore, the initial networks of these participants are composed of their family members and friends which they use as a starting point for both business development network extension. Most of the extended social media networks of the participants comprised of individuals from their minority communities and based on similar British Muslim life experiences.

These networks provide them with a platform, which they use to seek guidance, offer altruistic assistance and gain both business communications and emotional support to develop comprehensive communication activities. These networks also allow participants to shape their marketing communications objectives in line with their interaction with other entrepreneurs on social media. These networks (made up of entrepreneurs from multiple backgrounds), also

allow the participants to take advantage of broad experiences of these members and provide them with comprehensive information to tackle their day to day communication issues.

These findings are in accordance with the empirical research carried out within the context of Effectuation theory as it also suggests that at the initial level entrepreneurs use their immediate networks (friends and family) for business development and network extension (Engel *et al.*, 2017). The proactive use of these social media networks allows participants to seek social media marketing communications expertise and share their own professional experiences (altruism) for both personal and group benefit (Burns *et al.*, 2015; Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005; Saxton *et al.*, 2016).

The main objective of these social media networks is not about helping entrepreneurs achieve any specific goals or pre-commitments from the members. It is about creating an online environment that utilizes information from varied resources and gives participants the best solution possible in an uncertain environment associated with entrepreneurship (Engel *et al.*, 2017).

In addition, previous academic research on ethnic networking suggests that religious and cultural places of ethnic entrepreneurs (Mosque and community centres) act as a social hub for the ethnic community and allow its members to share resources for personal and collective growth (Kraybil *et al.*, 2010). Anwar & Daniel, (2016; 2015), argued that ethnic entrepreneurs in the UK utilize there extend family networks and ethnic community to acquire both marketing and financial capital. However, this research also extends Anwar and Daniel (2016; 2015) findings by adding that the British Muslim entrepreneurs networks are not limited to their original ethnicities, but they also extend into other Muslim ethnicities in the UK based on similar British Muslim experiences. The findings on this research also extend effectuation theory in the context of networking by arguing that social media groups based on similar

religious and cultural experiences have the potential to provide value to entrepreneurs in terms of network extension and possible business support for mutual benefit.

Moreover, growing number of the participants in this research are also using social media to network with mainstream Caucasian population and also both Muslims and non-Muslims living globally in order to maximise their social networking potential and to gain a competitive marketing edge. The reason behind the increase in ethnic and mainstream interaction is due to the participants' individual circumstances and life experiences. All of the participants in this research are grown up in British society and attended local schools and are well versed in social media. They consider English as their main spoken language and understand local cultural dynamics and their place in it. Their ability to understand both British and Muslim cultures provide them with more opportunities to interact with their counterparts in the mainstream market as compare to their parents' immigrant generation.

McPherson (2007), supports these findings, as he also stated that the first and second generation of south Asian ethnicities is more integrated into the mainstream British cultural environment than their immigrant parents. Therefore, this opportunity provides them with an advantage to understand local cultural dynamics and how they can utilize it for their benefit. As stated by Cruz *et al.* (2017), networking based on similar religious beliefs has the potential to acculturate ethnic minorities in mainstream societies. They further argue that such networks are also joined by the mainstream population which gives both of them the platform to interact and takes advantage of each other cultural heritage for collective benefits.

Furthermore, the participants in this research integrate online social networking with the offline environment by participating in both ethnic and mainstream events. This research has indicated

that majority of the participants have attended local cultural and entrepreneurial events in which they promoted their products and develop relationships with other ethnic and mainstream businesses who are also targeting the same consumer market.

Participation in these events has allowed British Muslim entrepreneurs to share their business communications experiences on social media pages (e.g., through the post, likes and sharing content), provide motivational support and learn from each other's mistakes. The collective interaction also allows the participants to devise joint-marketing efforts to engage consumers and develop a long-term relationship.

The development of business relationships via social media is corroborated by Wang *et al.* (2016), as they argue that growing number of businesses are using social media to develop Guanxi (business relationship) based on similar interest. Wang *et al.* (2016), further stated that various social media features such as likes, comments, and sharing enable businesses to increase business performance and allow them to collaborate, innovate and market their products and services efficiently.

As stated in the findings section, one of the main objectives of these social media networks is to create a win-win situation for businesses. This is supported by Singaraju *et al.* (2016), as they state that social media is a technological platform that enable businesses to proactively pool their resources and develop higher level resources to benefit each other and realize their optimal value creation potential.

Previous academic research on online relationship development among businesses considers similar professional interest as a critical ingredient that enhances the quality of trust that led to long-term relationship development (Quinton & Wilson, 2016). However, the findings in this research extend social media marketing research within the context of B2B relationship by

indicating that similar belief system and values are another indicators that have the potential to develop trust among businesses and prompt them to pool their resources for mutual benefit.

The scope of participants involvement with social media networks is not limited to professional development, but it also includes emotional support that enables them to counter both personal and professional business issues participants encounter daily. This form of personal sharing allows participants to gain trust and results in growing social capital among group members. From a business communications perspective, an increase in social capital allows participants to gain access to other group member's networks (expanding consumer market) and gain positive word of mouth advertising. Table 7.5 shows the key themes identified in the literature review and how the findings mentioned in this section further extend previous research.

Existing research	British Muslim networking (Findings)
Lack of academic research on online networks and how ethnic entrepreneurs can use these platforms to resolve business issues.	This research has extended ethnic entrepreneurship literature by incorporating online (social media) networks of ethnic entrepreneurs to resolve business issues.
Previous academic research on ethnic networking suggests that religious and cultural places of ethnic entrepreneurs (Mosque and community centres) act as a social hub for the ethnic community and allow its members to share resources for personal and collective growth.	Participants also use social media networks that are not limited to their original ethnicities, but they also extend into other Muslim ethnicities in the UK based on similar British Muslim experiences.
Previous research indicate that ethnic networks allowed entrepreneurs to expand their business prospects through its social networks which is based on trust and solidarity within the ethnic group, thus creating market competitiveness.	Participants also use social media based ethnic networks for co- marketing collaborations, seeking marketing audiences, learning from each other mistakes and providing emotional support.
Effectuation theory suggest that entrepreneurs resolve their business issues by utilizing their personal and professional networks. However, existing research with in the context of effectuation theory do not elaborate about the personal networks of the	The findings on this research extend effectuation theory in the context of networking by arguing that social media groups based on similar religious and cultural experiences have the potential to provide value to entrepreneurs in terms of

entrepreneurs (apart from family and friends).	network extension and possible business support for mutual benefit.
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Table 7.5: Key themes in British Muslim networking section.

7.5 Conceptual framework

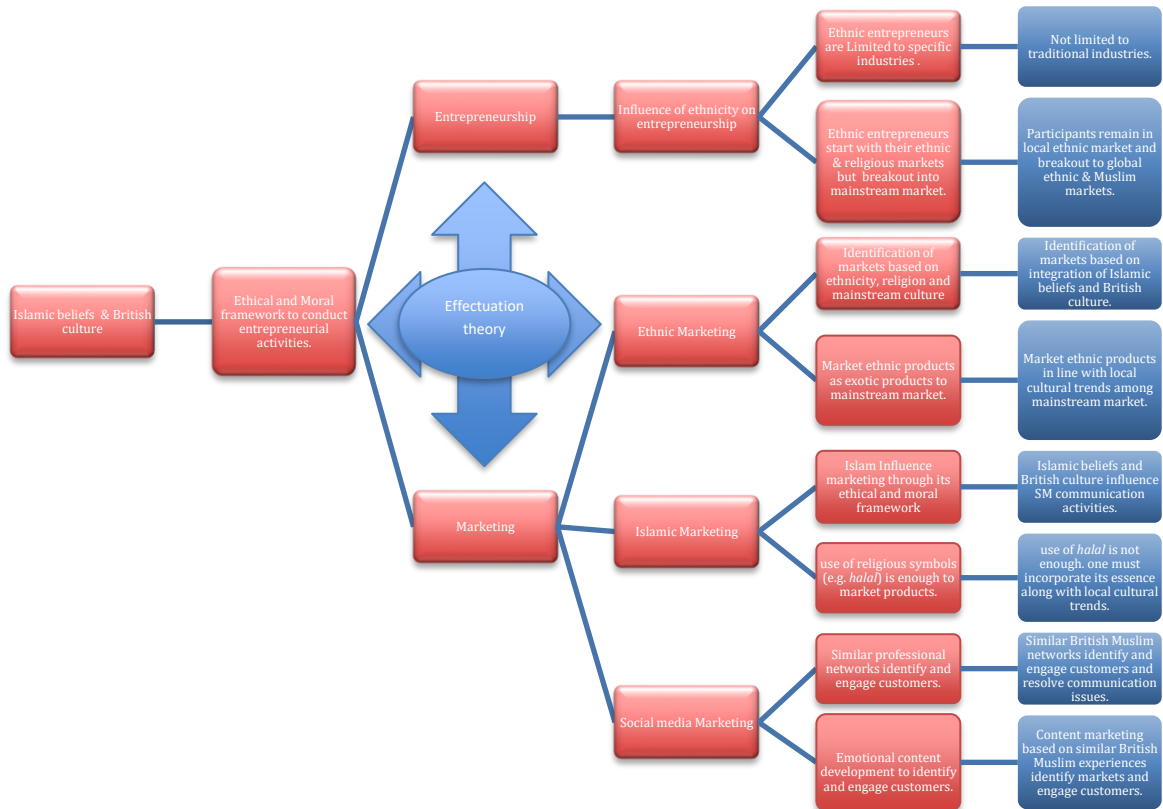


Figure 7.1: Conceptual framework

In this conceptual framework (figure 7.1), the researcher has showcased the key themes emerging from the literature review (in pink colour) and how the findings of this research extend the existing research (blue colour). This framework has selected effectuation theory as a theoretical lens to inform the reader about the influence of Islamic beliefs and British culture on entrepreneurship in general and their social media communication activities.

The participants in this study believe that their business practices are in accordance with the ethical and moral framework promoted by Islam and British culture. This form of entrepreneurship supports Islamic entrepreneurship literature that considers Muslim entrepreneurs are someone whose business actions reflect Islamic belief system including rules and regulations mentioned in the Quran. It also emphasizes the importance of local cultural (British values) and how it influences the participant's business activities.

Existing entrepreneurship literature within the context of ethnicity has indicated that ethnic entrepreneurs are limited to specific offline industries (e.g. restaurants, taxi grocery stores, accountants) (Jamal et al, 2015). There is an academic study conducted on the online retail ethnic businesses (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). They contend that ethnic entrepreneurs are not limiting themselves to established ethnic businesses but using digital media to enter new industries (Anwar and Elizabeth, 2016). The findings of this research support above mentioned conclusion that participants are not limited to their ethnic industry, but are entering into online retail, manufacturing and services sector (e.g. marketing and lifestyle consultants).

The current literature also suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs start off with their ethnic and religious markets but then enter into the mainstream market to grow their business. However, the findings indicate that participants are not entering into the mainstream markets but keeping themselves into the ethnic and religious markets due to the new opportunities provided by these consumer segments.

Prior research also argues that identification of the market and customer engagement is only based on their ethnic, religious and mainstream consumers. However, the research finding informs that the integration of religious belief system (Islam) and mainstream culture (British) of the participants is manifested in the way they identify market gaps and engage customers. It also takes into account the mainstream cultural trends that influence their customer's behaviour.

For example, the findings contend that use of halal is not enough for these participants to market their products and services. They believe that one must incorporate the essence of “Halal” along with local cultural trends in the form of cleanliness, and practical attributes of the products(see page 182-185 for further details) to add value.

The previous research has also suggested that entrepreneurs are using social media networks based on similar professional experiences to identify market opportunity. These entrepreneurs also use emotional and functional content on social media to engage customers. The findings indicate that the social media communication activities of the participants include the creation of personal/business pages, joining of relevant groups and developing content, which is in line with both Islamic and British values. These communications activities allow them to identify and engage consumers from their community. These communication activities also informed the reader about how the participants are integrating Islamic beliefs and British cultural values as depicted in their communication activities and their interaction with their consumers. This form of acculturation process also reaffirms the main aim of this research that Islam mediated through British culture influence the communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs.

In addition, one of the main communication issues among the participants is lack of social media business communications expertise and lack of movement and private sector support. They tend to resolve these issues by joining social media minority and mainstream groups based on similar professional interests and British Muslims experiences. These groups provide them with business communications guidance, emotional support and develop co-marketing and other collaborative opportunities to identify and engage consumers.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this research study is to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs. In this chapter, the researcher has provided a conclusion of this thesis by outlining the main research findings and how they are answering the research aim and objectives. This research concludes that participants consider themselves as British Muslim entrepreneurs since they believe that the ethical and moral framework they use to conduct business activities is in accordance with their Islamic beliefs and British cultural values.

The findings also reveal that the participants do not expand it into the mainstream market but remain in their ethnic and religious markets due to the various opportunities offer by these market segments. The businesses these participants are coming up with are not limited to ethnic specific industry, but they are also entering non-ethnic industries in the form of online-retail, dieticians, marketing and lifestyle consultants. The social media communication activities they use to identify markets and engage customers are also influence by their religion and local British culture.

The social media activities of these participants include both networking and content marketing (Based on Islamic beliefs and British cultural values). Networking based on similar British Muslim background and experiences allow them to resolve communication barriers as they provide them the opportunity to seek both marketing and technical guidance and collaborate with each other for mutual benefits.

8.2 Research Question 1

What does it mean to be a British Muslim entrepreneur?

Objective 1

To understand Islam as a religion and its teachings on entrepreneurship.

The first research objective was to explore Islam as a religion and its teachings on entrepreneurship. The findings of this objective suggest that participants consider themselves as British Muslims since they believe that their personal and professional (entrepreneurial) lives are in accordance with Islamic belief and British culture. Participants also discussed the impact of Islamic beliefs and British culture and values on their business activities as compared to their ethnic culture and mainstream competitors.

The participants also stated that they do not find any difference between Islamic beliefs and British cultural values. They argue that both aspects of their identity represent the universal code of ethics and morality which encourages them to live their personal and professional lives for both individual and societal benefits. These findings confirm the first proposition of this research which suggests that religion encourage its adherents to work for individual and societal progress and provide ethical and moral framework to conduct business activities.

8.3 Research Question 2

How British Muslim entrepreneurs, identify market opportunities and segment consumers by using social media platforms.

Objective 2

To explore how British Muslim entrepreneurs, identify markets and segment consumers by using social media platforms.

The participant's Islamic beliefs and British cultural values have a direct impact on their market identification and consumer segmentation. These research findings suggest the identification of entrepreneurial market opportunities of these participants are based on their personal interests, education, skill set, and ability to identify an opportunity through common ethnic, local culture and religious experiences. These participants use various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat to identify market opportunities and segment consumers.

These findings contradict the second proposition of this research which suggests that religion, ethnicity, and cultural traits independently have the potential to influence entrepreneurial actions in terms of market identification and customer segmentation (Ram et al., 2017). Whereas this research finds that the role of similar Islamic and British cultural experiences are the key factors that allow them to identify markets gaps and segment customers. The participant's target the market is mainly comprised of British Muslim consumers, but they also segment the market based on the mainstream, ethnic and religious consumers and those who follow local (British) social trends (e.g., health conscious, environment friendliness).

In addition, the current academic literature suggests that participants may be pushed or pulled into ethnic entrepreneurship (Jamal et al., 2015). This study support pulls theory approach by stating that education, personal interests, skill-set and the ability to identify market gaps based on similar ethnic and religious experiences allow participants to become

entrepreneurs. However, this research also adds that participants identify market opportunities based on local cultural trends. They believe that the consumption behaviour of their target market (mainly consisting of British Muslim consumers) is influenced by local consumption trends such as health consciousness, ethical resourcing, environment friendliness, higher consumer expectations, etc. Therefore, the participants identify market opportunities by taking into account their religious and local environment aspects. For example, one of the participants in this study stated here the use of environment-friendly wood from green forests to make Islamic greeting cards as she believes that it is one of the requirements of her target market whose consumption behaviour is based upon protecting the environment and promoting ethical resourcing.

Furthermore, the fourth proposition of this research argues that ethnic entrepreneurs usually remain in ethnic consumer markets, but some entrepreneurs break out of it due to higher education level and maturation of the ethnic markets (Dawson & Henley, 2012). However, this research study negates this view by arguing that participants are not breaking out into the mainstream market as they believe that ethnic entrepreneurs do not meet current consumer expectations of British Muslim consumers. Therefore, the participants believe that they have more opportunities to identify market gaps in accordance with the changing needs of ethnic consumers as mentioned above. Another reason to remain in the ethnic market is the rise of digital and social media which allowed the participants to identify the same ethnic markets in both Muslim minorities (e.g., Muslim Americans, European Muslims) and Muslim majority countries.

In addition, the fifth proposition of this research argues that ethnic entrepreneurs are using digital media to enter non-ethnic business sectors. The findings of this research extend this proposition by informing that participants are not limited to online retail sector but also into manufacturing and services sector (e.g. marketing and lifestyle consultants) sectors.

8.4 Research Question 3

What social media communication activities British Muslim entrepreneurs are using to engage customers?

Objective 3

To explore the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of customer engagement.

The third objective was to identify the communication activities employed by British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of customer engagement. The findings suggest that the participants market their products and services through social media networks that allow them to identify markets and engage customers. The reason behind it is the low cost, ease of using social media and its ability to identify and engage niche markets.

The findings also reveal that participants create personal social media pages and join social media networks to identify potential market and engage customers. They conduct self-promotional activities on these pages by showing personal (pictures of themselves and their family and friends) and product pictures and videos and add positive customer reviews for to identify markets and customer engagement. They also use these pages to promote various social causes which allow them to create a positive image of their business. Participants use of social media content is highly influenced by their British Muslim experiences (including Islamic belief system and British values) as it allows them to engage more with their customers and provide them a competitive edge in the market.

The findings also show that women entrepreneurs are more active on social media as compared to male entrepreneurs. These women participants share their personal and professional experiences on social media which they believe create an online community based on similar British Muslim experiences. This form of online community development allows them to increase customer trust and become more competitive in the market.

These findings extend online networking research within the context of business communications by stating that individual beliefs and values also play an important role in network marketing. These findings are supported by Smith *et al.* (2017), as they proposed that similar belief system and life history has the potential to increase social capital among entrepreneurs within the context of social media and create value. These findings support the sixth proposition of this research state that ethnic entrepreneurs use their ethnic resources to identify and engage customers on social media platforms.

In addition, the participants also revealed that they use multiple social media networks to market their products and services as they believe that their potential customer has a presence on all these platforms. The participants also attend offline networks (e.g., British Muslim business expo) to meet potential customers. The pictures and videos they take in these events are then posted on their social media personal pages and groups which allow them to increase their market reach. These findings extend proposition seven by adding networks and marketing content based on British Muslim experiences has the potential to identify markets and engage customers.

8.5 Research Question 4

Is there any relationship between Islamic belief and the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs?

Objective 4

To analyse whether there is any relationship between Islamic beliefs and the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs.

The social media communication activities of the participants are not limited to product updates and relevance for customers, but it also reflects their deep-rooted Islamic belief system and British cultural values. For instance, these participants stated that ethics and morality play a very important role during their interaction with the customer which they believe is derived from the Islam beliefs and British cultural values. As these belief systems and values have taught them to follow the principals of truthfulness, fairness and provide the best deal to their customers.

The participants also discussed the role of *Dawah* an Islamic religious belief that makes it compulsory for every Muslim to spread the message of God in their daily lives. The participants believe that it is their religious obligation to use their personal and professional lives as a way of spreading Islamic teachings. However, their intention is not to convert non-Muslims into Muslims but embody the principals of Islam as part of their social media communication activities to create a positive image of their religion in the minds of their customers. Therefore, by following the principals of ethics and morality derived from their Islamic belief system and British cultural values make them feel that they are positively playing their role for both their personal and societal development.

The participants believe that British values such as freedom of expression and individualism have taught them the idea that they have a right to express their feeling and make a positive difference in society if it does not subjugate the right of their customers. This view is supported by studies within spiritual and Islamic marketing literature which suggest that the goal of

marketing is not just about satisfying consumer materialistic needs but also considering their spiritual, social and moral desires (Hastings, 2017; El-Bassiouny, 2016).

One can also notice the influence of *Halal* and *Haram* distinction and following the principals of modesty in a participant's social media communication activities. For example, participants would not market products and services which are prohibited in Islam (e.g., the sale of pork meat, alcohol, interest led financial loan and gambling). In the same line participants' communication activities would always project fully covered women models on their social media platforms. Here the meaning of modesty is not limited to covering oneself fully in the advertising literature but also include not exaggerating about one's product and services with customers. Participant's ethnic values such as hard work, persistence and putting family first are the recurring sub-themes one can notice on their social media content as they communicate with their customers.

These findings are supported by Shukor and Jamal, (2015), who stated that when targeting British Muslims, businesses must keep in mind the Halal and Haram distinction and make their communication activities in line with Islamic principles such as modesty. In addition, the participants share their personal experiences and socio-economic issues related to their British Muslim consumers on social media platforms. The sharing of similar British Muslim experiences to engage customers is supported by Christ and Brian (2014), as they argue that cultural sensitivity provides marketers the opportunity to develop close relationships with their customers based on mutual trust and shared experiences.

8.6 Research Question 5

What communication barriers are faced by British Muslim entrepreneurs when targeting consumer markets and how they resolve them?

Research Objective 5

To investigate the communication barriers faced by British Muslim entrepreneurs when targeting consumer markets and how they resolve them.

This study reveals that one of the most important communication barriers participants encountered is the lack of social media expertise and the cost associated with it. They also believe that the government and private sector have failed to provide them with resources, which would allow them to compete equally with their mainstream competitors.

Therefore, they use both online and offline networks to gain social media expertise and use it to create further collaborative and co-marketing opportunities. Most of these networks of the participants are comprised of British Muslim entrepreneurs which allow them to assist each other based on similar ethnic, local and religious experiences. Some of the participants have joined mainstream networks too, but they are more active in British Muslim online groups.

These findings contradict ethnic entrepreneurial networking literature that suggests that ethnic entrepreneurs only use their own ethnic and religious networks to identify market opportunities (Jamal *et al.*, 2015). The participants in this research are born and bred in the UK, and they identify more with their religion and local British culture as compare to their ethnicities. Hence one can observe that their online and offline networking is not limited to their ethnic networks but also take into account other ethnicities with similar Islamic religion and mainstream networks. Hence these findings extend proposition eight that state that ethnic entrepreneurs

only use their own ethnic and religious networks to seek business guidance and resolve their business issues.

Social media plays a crucial role when it comes to network identification and customer engagement. As it allows participants to quickly identify and become members of various online networks within their field and use it to share and gain business communications experience with each other. These findings are supported by Wang *et al.* (2016), as they argue that a growing number of businesses are using social media to develop *Guanxi* (business relationship) based on similar interest. Wang *et al.* (2016) further stated that various social media features such as likes, comments, and sharing enabled businesses to increase business performance and allow them to collaborate, innovate and market their products and services effectively.

These networks allow participants to identify collaborative opportunities and develop co-marketing activities to locate new customers and increase their market share. Some of the participants share each other's profiles on their personal social media pages that helps them to increase their potential customers by taking advantage of each other's social media following. This is supported by Singaraju *et al.* (2016), as they state that social media is a technological platform that enables businesses to proactively pool their resources and develop higher level resources to benefit each other and realize their optimal value creation potential.

Current academic research on online customer relationship management within the context of small business consider similar professional interest as an important element that has the potential to increase the quality of trust that leads to long-term relationship development (Quinton and Wilson, 2016). The fifth proposition of this research indicate that networks based on similar professional experiences can identify markets and engage customers. However, the

findings in this research add that similar belief system and values are other factors that can develop trust among businesses and prompt them to pool their resources for mutual benefit.

Furthermore, the scope of participant's involvement with social media networks is not limited to professional development, but it also includes emotional support that enables them to counter both personal and professional business issues participants experience on a daily basis. This form of personal sharing allows participants to gain trust and results in growing social capital among group members. From a marketing perspective, an increase in social capital allows participants to gain access to other group member's networks (expanding consumer market) and gain positive word of mouth advertising.

8.7 Research Question 6

How can this research extend effectuation theory by adding religious beliefs as one of the factors that influence entrepreneurial actions?

Objective 6

To extend effectuation theory by adding religious beliefs as one of the factors that influence entrepreneurial actions.

Academic research on effectuation theory suggests that entrepreneur's beliefs (who is the entrepreneur) has a direct impact on entrepreneurial actions. However, it does not provide an in-depth understanding of who is the entrepreneur. Therefore, this study extends effectuation theory by adding that individual Islamic beliefs and local British cultural play a very important part in the development of the question of who the entrepreneur is and how it influences entrepreneurial actions within the context of social media communications (detail discussion on the theoretical contribution is mentioned in original contribution section).

8.8 Research Limitations

Some of the research limitations the researcher has encountered during the study are as follow.

1. Due to time limitation and financial constraint the researcher was not able to gather data from only North England (Manchester, Bradford), Midlands (Birmingham) and London.
2. The findings of this research cannot be generalized since theoretical saturation was reached on the 26 participants and no new data was emerging.
3. The researcher wanted to recruit participants from multiple Muslim ethnic backgrounds. However, since majority of the cities the researcher visited had south Asian majority businesses, which limited the ability of the researcher to find participants from non-south Asian backgrounds such as Arabs, Muslim Africans, Caucasian, Muslims etc. The researcher has also attempted to contact non-south Asian entrepreneurs by utilizing social media, apps and emails but there were only two entrepreneurs responded positively to take part in this research.
4. The researcher wanted to pursue ethnographic fieldwork study which would have involved being with the participants as they conducted their daily business activities. The researcher believed that this form of fieldwork would be more appropriate especially within the context of phenomenology research. However, due to the busy schedule of these participants and their unwillingness to allocate more time to this study limited the ability of the researcher to carry out ethnographic studies.
5. Some of the participants showed a varied form of reluctance to questions related to their religion and human resource and financial activities.

8.9 Original Contribution to Research

Current academic research has discussed entrepreneurial actions are the result of individual characteristics, experiences, and their potential to identify market gaps and effectively utilize market opportunities. However, there is lack of research on the individual belief system and values (which form such entrepreneurial characteristics, experiences, and expertise at the first place) of entrepreneurs and its impact on their entrepreneurial actions. Therefore, by using effectuation theory, this research extends academic entrepreneurship literature by postulating that religious belief system and local cultural values (as in the case for the research participants) has the potential to influence their entrepreneurial actions in general and their social media communications activities in particular.

Effectuation theory argues that who is the entrepreneur (identity) has a direct impact on entrepreneurial actions. However, the theory does not provide an in-depth understanding of who is the entrepreneur. Therefore, this research further contributes towards effectuation theory by arguing that individual religious belief system and local cultural values play a vital part in the development of the question of who is the entrepreneur and how it influences entrepreneurial actions.

The research further extends effectuation theory within the context of marketing by arguing that entrepreneur's personal experiences in the form of their religious belief system and local culture can influence their social media communication activities. The findings also argue that social media networks based on the similar religious beliefs and local culture has the potential to create an entrepreneurial community for both personal and professional benefits.

In addition, the recent academic literature on ethnic entrepreneurship has discussed and debated ethnicity and religion, and its impact on immigrant businesses. Most of the journal articles written on this subject have viewed ethnicity as an independent variable, which is isolated from social, institutional undercurrents in the host society. Although, there are few academic studies which have discussed the role of host society institutions in the form of mainstream market and government policies within the context of ethnic entrepreneurship (Jones *et al.*, 2017). Nevertheless, even these studies are not able to explain the relationship between host society institutions such as mainstream culture with ethnic religious beliefs and how it affects entrepreneurial actions. Hence, this research contributes towards ethnic entrepreneurship literature by explaining the process of integration of individual ethnic beliefs (Islam) with host society culture (British values) and how it influences British Muslim entrepreneurs' social media communication activities.

Moreover, current studies on ethnic entrepreneurs deal with their beliefs and its influence on their daily lifestyle in general (Rafiq, 1992; Basu, 1998; Dhaliwal, 2004; Dana, 2007; Hussain *et al.*, 2008). These studies mainly examine the influence of ethnicity and religion on the business activities of ethnic entrepreneurs in the non-virtual world (Gbadamosi, 2015 Jamal *et al.*, 2015, Altinay, & Altinay, 2008). There are very few academics (an exception being Anwar and Daniel, 2014, 2015, 2016) who focus on the online media marketing practices of ethnic entrepreneurs. As stated by Smith *et al.* (2017), there is a fundamental difference between online and offline marketing activities of entrepreneurs. They argue that online marketing can identify niche markets and engage customers more effectively and efficiently as compared to offline marketing. Therefore, this research has further extended academic ethnic marketing literature by exploring how religious beliefs and local culture and values influence an entrepreneur's communication activities on social media platforms.

This research study also negates existing ethnic marketing research by claiming that ethnic entrepreneurs do not necessarily breakout of the ethnic market but rather identify and engage ethnic consumers in other Muslim majority and minority countries due to the growing popularity of social media. The research further adds that market identification among ethnic entrepreneurs is about not only understanding ethno-religious beliefs and values. Instead, one should also identify new market opportunities by offering products and services that enable ethnic consumers to integrate their ethno-religious beliefs with mainstream local cultural values. Furthermore, ethnic marketing research within the context of networking has discussed the importance of ethnic and religious networks and its impact on ethnic marketing. However, research participants in this study are slowly moving towards mainstream networks mainly through social media to acquire marketing expertise as they identify themselves as both Muslim and British and active part of a mainstream society.

The importance of social media marketing can be drawn from the claim that this particular digital media is soon going to replace traditional media (e.g., TV, newspaper) in the next few years due to its ability it target niche markets at low cost. Nevertheless, there are few academic articles written on this subject which provide a conceptual understanding of social media communication activities (Bolat & Kooli, 2016; Humphreys, 2013; Kaplan, 2012), and how businesses are using it to market their products and services (Felix *et al.*, 2017; Bolat & Kooli, 2016; Yadav *et al.*, 2015). Of those journal articles, they accept the growing influence of social media over traditional form of mediums including desktop social media and online marketing (Bolat & Kooli, 2016). However, there is lack of academic research on the use of social media in mainstream organizations in general (Bolat & Kooli, 2016) and among ethnic entrepreneurs in particular (Anwar and Daniel, 2016). In addition, the majority of the academic research carried out in social media marketing focused on the use of social media by entrepreneurs for marketing purposes. However, there is a lack of research on the institutional forces such as

religion and local cultural environment, and how it influences the social media marketing activities of entrepreneurs.

8.10 Managerial implications

This research study informs both mainstream and entrepreneurs about the growing role of social media and how one can use it to identify potential customers, reduce cost and develop niche markets. This research also highlights the importance of online content generation based on similar belief system and values which would allow entrepreneurs to engage with their customers at a personal level and develop a long-term relationship based on trust and mutual respect. However, it does not mean that online content generation should be based on one's religious belief and values alone. One can also take into account alternative belief system and values of individuals in the form of Environmentalism, sustainability, Atheism LGBT rights, etc. since the objective here is to develop a long-term relationship based on the similar mindset common way to see the world and their place in it.

The research also points out the networking potential of social media and how similar individual belief system and values of resource-limited group members allow them to receive marketing expertise and develop collaborative opportunities in the form of co-communication activities to increase their market share.

The growth of British Muslims consumers as a potential market segment is not limited to British Muslim entrepreneurs. As stated in this study British Muslim consumers want to live their life in accordance with Islamic belief system, but local British cultural values influence their consumption behaviour. Therefore, this study provides an opportunity to mainstream businesses to identify market gaps in this consumer segment and offer them products and

services which would enable British Muslim consumer to satisfy their growing needs and provide them with an opportunity to integrate into the mainstream society.

8.10.1 Policy implications

This study allows the policymakers to consider British Muslims not just as a minority but also as a growing market segment that has the potential to support the national economy by identifying new markets and creating job opportunities. The ability of the participants to extend their business to America and oil-rich Middle Eastern countries is just one of the examples of how the UK will be able to increase its exports output and tax revenues. The uncertain Brexit environment has also made British Muslim entrepreneurs indispensable as they can act as a bridge between the UK and other Muslim majority countries. This form of arrangement has the potential to create and foster Bi-lateral and free trade agreements that could allow UK businesses to cater the global Muslim consumer class worth £1 trillion.

Moreover, the government has to develop policies that support British Muslim businesses by offering them entrepreneurial training programs including mentoring and advisory services. The policymakers have to take into account that minority businesses lack economic support from banks and government departments which makes it difficult for them to compete in the market. Therefore, the government has to create financial policies that allow minority businesses to easily generate financial resources from banks and offer tax benefits or rebates to support the business in their initial days to become competitive. The business-friendly ethnic policies towards British Muslim businesses will allow the policymakers to create a positive image of the government and encourage the Muslim minority to support government initiatives to create a multicultural environment and integrate Muslim minority in the mainstream society.

8.11 Future Research Directions

The main aim of this research is to explore the importance of the entrepreneur's individual belief system and values and how it influences their business in general and communication activities in particular. Future research can extend this research area by incorporating the integration of other minority religions (e.g. Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, etc.) with British values and its influence on their business communications activities. The researcher do not have to limit themselves to religion, but they can also explore alternative identities such as Environmentalism, sustainability, LGBT and more to understand how these belief systems and ideologies can impact entrepreneurship and more specifically business communications. One can also take this research into another market context such as America and the Middle East and try to understand how the modern consumer culture influence the communications activities of entrepreneurs in both the Muslim and non-Muslim world.

At present, ethnic entrepreneurship research has started to explore macro-economic factors such as government policies, mainstream market and local cultural environment that affects their business. However, they must take into account other social institutions such as ethnic religion, representation of minorities in mainstream media and how it affects their business.

The researchers can also attempt to explore social media and networking and how similar belief system and values of group members can result in the new market identification, resources allocation, sharing business communications experience and other collaborative activities. In addition, this research study has also revealed the growing use of social media networks by British Muslim entrepreneurs. Future researchers can further explore the community norms in these women-led social media networks and how it influences entrepreneurial action within the context of market identification, B2B networks generation, and customer engagement.

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Appendix 1

Recruitment Poster

How Islamic beliefs influence the social media communication activities of Young British Muslim Entrepreneurs?

Invitation to Participate in Research

As part of a PhD thesis study, I am conducting research to explore the influence of Islamic beliefs on the social media communication activities of British entrepreneurs. I am particularly interested in exploring the variations of social media communication activities employed by British entrepreneurs in different sectors. To identify which social media platforms British entrepreneurs are currently employing to target consumer markets and why? I am also interested in terms of investigating communication barriers faced by British entrepreneurs when targeting consumer markets and what recommendations can be made after identifying these barriers?

All information provided by participants will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential.

If you think you would interested in participating in these confidential interviews, please contact me using any of the following:

Email: S.Hayder@edu.salford.ac.uk

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Syed Ali Hayder

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Interview Consent Form

To whom it may concern

My name is Syed Ali Hayder and I am a PhD researcher in the Salford Business School, University of Salford. As part of my PhD thesis, I am conducting a study on the influence of Islam on the social media communication activities of young British Muslim entrepreneurs. I am particularly interested in how Islam and societal values affect the marketing decision of entrepreneurs in the age of social media.

I would like to reassure you as a participant in this research thesis have several rights which are as follow.

Participation in this research is entirely on a voluntary basis.

The participant has a right to refuse to answer any question during the interview.

The participant has the right to withdraw from the research.

I would also like to assure you that the result of the research will remain confidential and will only be used by the research team for strictly academic purposes. In addition, expert of the data provided by the research participant might be used in presenting conference papers and writing and publishing academic and newspaper articles. However, the identification of the research participant during the whole process will remain anonymous.

I would appreciate it if you can sign this form to indicate your consent to participate in this research project.

Signed: _____

Date:

I would like to sincerely thank you for your participation in this research project. It is very much appreciated. I can be contacted at S.Hayder@edu.salford.ac.uk should you have any questions or concerns regarding this research project.

Appendix 2

Interview Guide

The topic of our research is about to explore whether Islamic belief has any influence on the social media communication activities of British Muslim entrepreneurs in terms of market identification and customer engagement. We are interested in finding if and how Islamic beliefs and values affect the communication activities of entrepreneurs. We would be really interested in your views and experiences in this regard and therefore, we wish to focus our discussion on your everyday lifestyle (practices) which includes your home, work and leisure.

1. Participants background, beliefs and entrepreneurial activities

Place of Birth or where one has been raised, childhood experiences including their relationship with friends, family and society and how it influences their personality as an individual in general and entrepreneur in particular. These questions address the formation of their religious beliefs (factors influencing it) and how it developed and influence their relationship with their environment. The interview guide also ask the nature of their business and whether their ethnic and religious communities help them in way in terms of business identification.

The following questions should be integrated naturally into above discussion and where necessary, further follow-up questions can be posed.

- What is your ethnic/religious background?
- How was life growing up as a minority member of the society? (Positives and negatives, including the role of school, family, friends, multicultural context and mainstream population). (Prompt: life as Muslim, ethnic (Pakistani British, Indian British, etc.).
- Does Islamic beliefs Influence your daily life specifically within the context of your business? If yes, then How? (elicit individual beliefs system and values).
- What are the life lessons you have learned from your parents and people around you and how it influences you as a person?
- What is the nature of their business? Why have you decided to become entrepreneurs, (which include both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons including the rationale behind identification of particular business offering or market).
- What is their vision for your business? (Where do they see themselves in the long term)?
- Does your ethnic or religious community influence you in any way on your business activities? If yes then why and how?

2. Every day activities related to Communications activities (Both Traditional and mainstream marketing).

- In your opinion what is Marketing and is it necessary to market your products/ services? Why?
- How do you see the role of internet as a marketing platform? Prompt: views regarding digital marketing, its pros and cons from entrepreneur's perspective).
- How do you identify your potential market?
- What kind of platforms you use for targeting and engaging customer and why?
- If yes, then what kind of activities you use to engage customers and why?
- In your opinion, the values or life lesson you have learned from your experiences (family, friends, religion, and society) affect in any way your decisions regarding marketing? If yes then How (provide examples).
- What are the key problems in their business (especially in the initial years) and how did they resolve it (this line of questioning might invoke them to talk about values which they used to solve business problems).

Appendix 3

Coding framework

Quotations	Issues discussed	Specific Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
<p><i>“Islam is a way of life... I think Islam is your own connection that you feel that something that is greater than you, something that can control every aspect of your life.... that you can turn to when you need” (RM9, Halal meat supplier).</i></p> <p><i>“What are British values? the values that we follow here and the laws that we obey here are humanity value and these have been in Islam for long...you cannot really distinguish on the basis of nationality...it is the media that has created a difference other than that I do not think that "British" values are very different than Islamic values” (RM13, Online Islamic Cards Retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“I am doing business because I want to make a difference. Want to change lives. Making money is a part of it but the main reason of doing business is because it is the Sunnah of my prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)” (RM1, EBay Retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“I think because I am essentially brought up in this (British) culture since a very young age, I understand the customers better...i know what they like and dislike. What frustrates them and makes them unhappy. What they like to eat and what music should be played in store etc.so it is easier for me to connect to them rather than my parents who do not have the British accent and were not essentially brought up in the culture here” (RM7, Coffee House owner).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difference between Islam and British cultural values • Commitment to Islamic and British values. • Focus on ethics and morality instead of financial gain when dealing with customers • Local British cultural insights as competitive edge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islam as a way of life • Ethics and morality • British Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of Islam and British Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being British Muslim

<p><i>“I have halal dietary requirements...I've visited super markets and I've seen food that looked amazing and I wished I could eat it but I could not because it was not halal... So, I took it for myself. I am an entrepreneur and my role is to identify a problem and find a solution for it...I am embarking the journey to create (Halal) food options that I have always desired to eat that were missing from my diet” (RM13, Frozen ready to eat retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“I have studied audiology and I think I am good enough to advice people on ears, so..I thought, why not work with my expertise”(RF15, Audiologist).</i></p> <p><i>“we can do other business but women shoes have chance of selling better because the percentage of population of women is greater than that of men. So, it's high chance of getting more customer. Women tend to keep up with fashion, if they do not like one design they will immediately jump to another one that works for them... and we have some previous experience too from eBay and amazon as well” (EBay women shoes seller).</i></p> <p><i>“I basically sell all around the world so they (customers) are from everywhere. Basically I cater with the basics, all plain so everyone buys it” (EBay women cloths seller).</i></p> <p><i>“They (Hookah, Smoke pipes) are majorly desi (south Asian community). men or women didn't really matter because people ordered shisha pipes for weddings, parties or sometimes it was just a couple of friends who wanted to stay at home and chill...it was basically for people who do not want to go to shisha place”(RM18, Online Hookah retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“We found a gap in the market... we have been looking at the market for</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying niche market segments based on personal and religious experiences. • Use of education to identify business opportunity. • Identifying general consumer segments based on professional experiences. • Selling to everyone (Mainstream market) • Catering to south Asian market based on their culture (Ethnic market). • Catering to Muslim niche market (Muslim niche market). • Catering to health conscious, ethnical oriented and environment friendly market. 		<p>Business identification</p> <p>Consumer segmentation</p>	<p>Being British Muslim Entrepreneur</p>
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a while and we saw the chances of growing telecommunication market. So we looked at the Muslim market and realised it is the fastest growing market and high spending market across the industry and nobody has brought the concept of bringing in all the services in one platform that Muslim community needs”
(RF20, Islamic App).

(RF22, Islamic greeting cards retailer)”

“It is easier for people to buy Mcdonalds or stuff like that as compared to healthy food options...so we are targeting the audience who knows the value of healthy food. A little more investment takes towards better health” **(RM11, camel milk retailer).**

“It is about ethical sourcing...the cards that we are making are produced by material that comes from sustainable forests because the environment is important to everyone. So, it is important for them to know that we have environment friendly products and we care about it” **(RF23, Online greeting card retailer).**

Theme 3

Quotations	Issues discussed	Specific Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
<p><i>“I use Facebook a lot and last few weeks we have been doing posts about myself. This is to tell people about my career background so that they feel more connected to me... The first thing that I did, was to tell my friend who was a social media expert and I started to network within the Birmingham area. (RM19, online grocery retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“The first thing I did was, I start my blog. I was always into books and I reviewed them people started to know me more</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Facebook posts for self- and product promotion. • Starting marketing from personal networks and moving forward • Use of social media analytics to reach relevant audiences. • Use of charity events for brand awareness. • Posting pictures of themselves along with their products. • Use of ethnic, religious and relevant mainstream social media networks. • Use of networks to discuss common issues and personal and professional struggles • Use of social networks to advance learning and development. • Use of ethnic, religious and mainstream quotations, personal inspirational/motivational messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of social media pages for brand awareness and customer engagement • To remain connected with customers • Networking • Customer insights • Use of social media groups to identify and engage customers. • Self-development • Ethnic content • Religious content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized social media pages. • Social media community • Content Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating through networks

<p><i>through the blog (RF24, TV presenter and business coach).</i></p> <p><i>“Showing people (on Facebook) what we are up to, what are products are, new activities that we are doing, happenings at the office, events that we are at, things we are doing, sampling, opportunities, giveaways” (RM13, Frozen food retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“I also use Facebook audience insights... I target audience, which are interested in the products, and then I make an ad. Then that ad has my website link so when people see it they directly</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing personal and product pictures. • Sharing customer reviews • posting questions • commenting on each other content that includes listening to each other and providing adequate advices. • Systematic content generation • SEO friendly content • Blogs • Differences between social media platforms in terms of market diversification. • Differences between social media platforms in terms of capability and reach. • Customer convenience. • Use of multiple account to increase sales • Use of offline environment e.g. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious oriented and mainstream Motivational content • Sharing personal stories • Product content • Customer reviews • Listening and communicating through content • SEO-friendly content • Use of SEO via blogs • Connecting Facebook, Instagram and snapchat to create brand awareness and customer engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating Social media channels • Integrating online and offline environment 	
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<p><i>land on my webpage and buy from there. Facebook automatically does that. If you have an audience, then Facebook send your ad automatically to the targeted people”.</i></p> <p>(RF9, Amazon fitness retailer).</p> <p><i>“We are doing a charity event in two weeks. In two weeks we will be pushing on social media about our company's ethics, how we are growing as a company and we want to encourage people to be a part of our campaign to help with our cause</i></p> <p>(RM11, Camel milk retailer).</p> <p><i>“I post pictures of myself wearing my</i></p>	<p>participating in festivals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to put a human to gain customer trust. • Online Content generation through offline activities • Use of offline environment to answer customer queries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media is not enough for identifying and engaging customers. 		
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<p><i>jewellery pieces...so if I don't post pictures for a week then I don't get much sales...so it works that way... they like you so they will like what you are wearing and buy it..so my marketing strategy is to utilise myself in show casing my jewellery. I do that twice a week and I mainly focus on getting good followers as it makes a huge difference”(</i> RF3, Online jewellery retailer).</p> <p><i>“Yeah, the groups(social media) are small and have common interests.... so that was to gain interest in similar business offers”</i> (RM21, Digital</p>				
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platform provider).

*“I started from groups(Online and offline) for healthy eating, cooking and weight loss first...then I noticed more and more Asians were adding me and redirecting me on other groups so that's how it started.
(RF1, Dietitian).*

*“So, my customer is Muslim mothers. I would be going on pages on social media where the Muslim women are”
(RF22, Islamic toy store).*

I was very targeted about the people I choose to connect with and that time I could do a quick search on Facebook...

I looked for friends of friends and entrepreneurial groups and communities (Facebook). There is this community, metaphorical business group in which I invested so this is an online marketer coach and they have a program called B schooling, which has around ten to fifteen thousand people on it, and I took those classes and they have helped a lot. I got many clients from there too...so when I was investing in myself, I was getting more and more exposure to the right kind of people I wanted to be surrounded with (RF25, Marketing consultant).

Theme 4

Quotations	Issues discussed	Specific Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
<p><i>Don't cheat don't lie every possible good thing that is there, they (parents) will tell you... I think all these things are something that British parents tell their children nothing different. (RM18, Hookah retailer).</i></p> <p><i>"He (customer) said, "Why are you (helping me) doing this?" and I said, "because my religion teaches us" so does Christianity, so does Buddhist and other religions...but why are we not able to do it as humans? is because we have forgot to...back to the point, to love humans" (RM4, EBay Horse wear retailer).</i></p> <p><i>"I use Islam as an opportunity to spread Daw'ah. When people look at me, they ask me where am I from? so I tell them then they ask me why are you Muslim? So it opens the door to that. When a women goes like, ok now</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants parents have influence on their business activities. • Being honest with customers. • Promoting Islam through one's business (marketing) activity. • Considering Islam as a law that one must obey. • No use of sexual appeal while selling products. • Selling one those products which participants think are good for them as well. • When it comes to ethnics both Islam and British values are same. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer interaction as guided by religion and family values. • Creating positive image of Islam through customer interaction. • Inculcating religion as part of both personal and professional lives. • Not using women as sex appeal when selling products. • Influence of British cultural values during customer interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics and Morality • Islamic Neeya (orientation) and Dawah as • Modesty • Halal and haram distinction • Cultural values. 	<p>British Muslim Marketing</p>

that I am a muslimah..I'll change my name to..lets say, Aisha and I'll wear naqab and stay behind my closed doors. There goes your opportunity of daw'ah...People want to know who they are talking to, it helps them build connection”
 (RM16 Marketing consultant).
 “Islam says, you need to speak the truth in any case. Other religions say that too but in Islam, it is a law to speak truth. So, when we are dealing online, we make sure we display the colours and specifications exactly like the real product. Whereas, others are using editors and effects, we don't. shoes height is usually 3 inches so there is no need to show a model wearing it but others showing model in less clothes wearing their shoes...in Islam you need to cover the body, so, we do not show models' body to display our product. We just show the shoe part that

how you are going to look wearing that specific article (RM5, EBay women shoe retailer).

“You see i sell all kinds of clothes even the sexier ones to the English crowd. So, even if my clothes are sexy, I would not picture them any sexier”(RM6 EBay women cloths retailer).

“We do not want to sell products that we think are un-Islamic. If we do not think that such products are good for us the how are we going to sell it to others? So, we don't” (RM5 EBay women shoe retailer).

“My father had a small grocery shop where my mother used to be as well and she told me how to be always polite with people and how to deal with customers... and in my business, where i meet all sorts of people. I stay polite with them and it has helped me a lot in being who I am today...and it is not just because of Islam it is because of the

<p><i>values taught to me by my parents as well as my school” (RF3, Online jewellery retailer).</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, don't cheat (with customers online) don't lie. Every possible good thing that is there, they will tell you... I think all these things are something that British parents tell their children. Nothing different” (RM18, Hookah retailer).</i></p>				
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Theme 4

Quotations	Issues discussed	Specific Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
<p>“I think the biggest issue is engagement. There is so much noise on social media these days with the hype of videos and live sessions that people have started to ignore many things. They just don't pay attention” (RF25, Marketing consultant).</p> <p>“Lack of experience, you can buy anything except experience people buy likes on Facebook and twitter but they cannot buy experience” (RM23, EBay seller A).</p> <p>“The logo is there with my brother's friend's help. I told him what I want, what colours I need to work with and all. So basically it was his helping hand that created the logo” (RF7, Audiologist).</p> <p>“We just had Pay per click (ppc) service an hour ago where they give our subscribers a free recipe E-book” (RM11 Online Halal food delivery service).</p> <p>“Negative comments, hatred, hacked IDs and persona attacks. But I don't take them as hurdles because when your brand is well established then you cannot really control such behaviour” (RF 8, Entrepreneurial Consultant).</p> <p>“Unless you pay something to Facebook, it's not going to work alone people won't</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much advertising clutter on social media. • Decreasing attention span of customers on social media. • Dependent on others in terms of product promotion. • Negative comments • personal attacks. • Hacked ID's 	<p>Difficult to engage customer due to competition.</p> <p>Difficulty in handling personal and technical issues.</p>	<p>Lack of social media expertise.</p>	<p>Resolution of communication problems through British Muslim networking.</p>

<p>see your posts”. (RM14, Islamic toy store supplier).</p> <p>“The website is still being designed because there is limited funds to build it. We do not have enough money to take professional photographs. Once the website is built then sales will increase a lot more rapidly because it’s a lot easier to order” (RM6, Halal meal prep company).</p> <p>“You have the identity with all the British Pakistanis you have like relationships, so no matter whether you go to a new place, you can always make new friends very easily even if you don’t know them before” (RM6, Halal meal prep company).</p> <p>“I found her (non-ethnic and non-Muslim contact) through a website where you can work with the mentors so I selected her and she reached out to me. She is a marketing specialist and I wanted to excel in marketing. So, she helped me with that and also my website needed some adjustments she fixed them and helped me in getting better in marketing” (RF21, Amazon Seller B).</p> <p>“I think collaboration is great, collaboration is good when you have mutual benefits. If you think you have the synergy with other brand and you think things will be good then you should collaborate. It is a very good way to bounce each other’s followings” (RM5, Halal food manufacturer).</p> <p>“I basically do challenges I ask them (Facebook group members) about their biggest (business) fears? and I am the ideal customer persona. So when they tell us then we invite them to come live and I ask other sisters in the community to encourage her and to boost her confidence and support her. After which she post the recorded video of Facebook live on her profile (for everyone to see and gain inspiration)” (RF 22, Motivational speaker).</p>	<p>Expensive Social media analytics</p>	<p>Financial difficulty to create brand awareness and engage customers.</p>	<p>Cost of social media advertising</p>	
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<p>“Ummah (global Islamic community) does not have an ethnic background. It is purely diversified; we are not reaching out to one ethnic group or the other. Ummah means community and it is all about togetherness. Ummah can be a decent from Britain or Spain. It has no colour no creed. We are reaching out to Muslim community. So as long as it connects on the basis of same believes then it can be anybody” (RM13, Digital platform provider).</p>	<p>expensive photoshoot for social media.</p> <p>Expensive website development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of ethnic and religious background to develop contacts. • mainstem contacts. • Working together • Mutual learning and development. • Challenging and guiding each other. 	<p>Business Contact development</p> <p>Business Collaboration</p>	<p>Networking</p>	
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