Empowerment and Entrepreneurship on WeChat: A Focus on Shared Stories of Muslim Women Entrepreneurs in China

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Abstract

New media entrepreneurship is already the most popular business model today. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the motivation and strategies of Muslim women entrepreneurship on WeChat. Design/ Methods/ Methodology - Using a qualitative research design, the data for our survey was obtained from 8 female entrepreneurs in Yiwu City. The authors conduct in-depth interviews methods to enable women to express their stories and experience voluntarily and truly in entrepreneurship activities. The interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study found that factors such to increase family income, intention to experience into entrepreneurial activities, and the ease of new media technology, have prompted Muslim women to start an online business. Furthermore, using WeChat, entrepreneurs and customers establish emotional connections to promote business development. Another key factor was also elaborated in this study where Muslim women strive to balance the relationship between family and their business. Implications and conclusion were also described in this research.

Keywords: Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs, WeChat, Muslim women, networking, relationships

1. Introduction

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Women's Report 2018/19 (Hechavarrá & Ingram, 2019), 111 million of the 163 million women entrepreneurs in 74 economies around the world have established businesses in older companies in recent years. Globally, the TEA (Total Entrepreneurial Activity) rate for women in 2019 was 10.2%, and studies around the world have confirmed positive growth in female entrepreneurs, including developing economies in the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Cuberes & Teignier, 2015; Mirjalili, Mirjalili, & Lewis, 2014; Hailemariam, Kroon, Van Engen, & Van Veldhoven, 2019). For China, the economy currently has the largest population in the world, 1.4 billion people, 48.7% of whom are women (World Bank, 2019). The business environment in China is mostly poorly understood, mainly due to cultural barriers and male-centric dominance (Lai, 2017). In the past decade, the world has provided more employment opportunities for women than ever before. The development and prevalence of this situation have changed the status of men as the main heads of household earning and women as housewives (Tambunan, 2018). At the same time, many rules were broken and restrictions on women were changed (De Silva et al. 2021). Modern women are influenced by a variety of factors, their desire for financial independence improves their quality of life, help more people through entrepreneurial activities, and expect more social recognition (Sorokhaibam & Laishram, 2011).

The use of digital technologies or digital entrepreneurship is a major driver of innovation and entrepreneurial activity (Leong, Tan, Tan & Faisal, 2020). Information technology offers a wide range of opportunities for developing women. Applying digital technology innovation throughout the COVID-19 outbreak has become even more important for women-led businesses. Social media entrepreneurship is one of the current business development channels that is growing rapidly. In China, the rapid development of e-commerce platforms such as JD.com, Taobao, and Tmall (Zhou, Gao, & Chimhowu, 2019) has attracted many entrepreneurs to take advantage of new technologies and online marketing. Today, the combination of social platforms and business has formed a new situation of WeChat business marketing. The operation of doing business with mobile phones has been recognized by many entrepreneurs (Townsend,

Wallace, Smart, & Norman, 2016; Kapinga, Suero Montero, & Mbise, 2019).

Judging from the interpretation of WeChat data in 2021, WeChat is now the most used communication software in Asia. Its apps are diverse and very convenient, and it's called a better WhatsApp. WeChat is comprehensive, covering all aspects of life activities in China, especially in recent years (Gao & Zhang, 2013). This even includes small merchants who need to collect payments through WeChat; during the pandemic, no media software can replace the use of WeChat. WeChat is a social media software, but it's not just for communication. Marketers discovered a new way to market products and attract customers by following and exploring WeChat Moments. The Chinese network is very powerful. People are more willing to share and accept products recommended by acquaintances (Chen, 2017), while acquaintance Moments are just nodes connected to the acquaintance network, you can not only monitor your products, but also recommend them (Chen, Chen, Guo, & Luo, 2018) to boost sales by receiving updates and photos from friends. Many Chinese businessmen take advantage of new media methods to run their businesses (Xue & Yu, 2017). This also includes Muslim women. Many Muslim women entrepreneurs are actively involved in changing business channels, especially the popularity of WeChat businesses. Muslim women's employment coincides with Islamic advocacy and conducts business activities within religious constraints (Bouzari, Salamzadeh, Soleimani, & Ebrahimi, 2021). Muslim women face both entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges, such as psychological issues, human capital, social capital, and more (Bouzari, et al., 2021). Chinese Muslim women are infiltrated by multiple cultures. On one hand, they are educated by Chinese traditional culture, and on the other hand, they receive the baptism of religious belief. They are influenced by traditional culture and Western culture, and at the same time regulate and restrain themselves in their religious beliefs. Chinese Muslim women are also seeking a path in a secular society, and this process is also challenging. For example, it is difficult for Muslim women to find employment in China while wearing hijabs, and it is difficult for Muslim women to maintain religious behavior in public. Most Muslims will choose to do business to make a living, and in recent years Muslim women have become the main force in the local business industry.

In Islam, entrepreneurship is part of the way of life, and entrepreneurial activities are intertwined with religion. Guidance for Islamic entrepreneurs to start a business based on the Quran and Hadith. Muslim women use the WeChat function for business activities, and it has become an option for Muslim women to survive.

The study will answer these 3 research questions:

1. What are the factors motivating the women to get into online business?

2. What are some of the approaches they use to market their products in WeChat?

3. What are the challenges that they face when starting and sustaining their online business?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Women Entrepreneurship and Social Media

Female entrepreneurship was introduced into an academic issue in the early 1980s (Pettersson, Ahl, Berglund, & Tillmar, 2017). A survey shows that women entrepreneurs vary widely around the world (Gimenez-Jimenez, Calabro & Urbano, 2020). Research on women entrepreneurs is still lacking. Women entrepreneurs face more challenges in the representation of social capital, access to information, or family barriers (Özsungur, 2019; Dheer & Treviño, 2019). Some studies look at women's occupational and family-related research (Afiouni & Karam, 2019, Bennett, Hennekam, Macarthur, Hope, & Goh, 2019). There were also researchers such as Startienė & Remeikienė, (2008), Ribes-Giner, Moya-Clemente, Cervelló- Royo, & Perello-Marin (2018) who describe about gender in entrepreneurship. Moreover, some studies focus on female entrepreneurship (See Chreim, Spence, Crick, & Liao, 2018). Other researchers focused on financial issues and leadership when studying bout women entrepreneurship found that financial issues (Naegels, Mori, & Espallier, 2021) and leadership (Hashim, Naldi, and Markowska, 2021) were highlighted. However, research on Muslim women entrepreneurs is less as compared to women entrepreneurs in general.

The digital environment has flourished in public media in recent years (Dy, Marlow & Martin, 2017; Bradić-Martinović, Zdravković & Mišić, 2020). Diverse digital media types, including web-based services, mobile applications, and social media, have created new entrepreneurial businesses and traditional growth models to provide services and products to new customers (Ebrahimi, et al., 2019). Digital media can present more tools and channels for entrepreneurs to expand social interactions and maintain those relationships (Reid & Wu, 2020). Digital entrepreneurs are involved in creating and delivering major business undertakings and tasks, including production, marketing, distribution, and stakeholder management, using information and communication technology (ICT) (Ngoasong, 2018).

Social media and other digital applications have an impact on perceived low-status and disadvantaged groups, including women with limited access to resources (Kawamorita et al., 2020). It is speculated that digital entrepreneurship facilitates the development and change of groups of women, such as the participation and practice of online platforms (McAdam, Crowley & Harrison, 2019). The impact of digital technology innovation on female entrepreneurship has

been studied in many previous articles. ICT brings enormous benefits to society, such as changing cultural activities, society, and the economy, while increasing productivity, expanding the customer base, and being able to access partnership opportunities to help others increase sales and revenue (Ojokoh, Zhang, Oluwadare. & Akintola, 2013). Furthermore, Jalil, Mohd, Man, Ali and Muhamad (2019) explain the rights of rural women to become entrepreneurs through ICT media. It is noted that through social media platforms, the use of ICT by women entrepreneurs in rural areas provides good employment opportunities and development strategies and creates good business opportunities (Uzunoğlu, & Kip, 2014; Caputo, Mehtap, Pellegrini & Alrefai, 2016). Social media also provides opportunities for women entrepreneurs in urban Bangladesh and encourages Kenya, Indonesia, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa to. (Cesaroni, Demartini, & Paoloni, 2017).

Women can use the information of the new media to speak for women, and through digital media women can enjoy the rights of economy, success, and empowerment. Madra-Sawicka et al. (2020) study whether Taiwanese social technology can be a source of empowerment. To determine the impact of digital technology on empowerment through online surveys of different feedback from men and women using social media, including Google+, YouTube, Linkedin, and Facebook. Women are responsible for using tools and information in social research to find their voices, build networks, and help people enjoy empowerment, success, and economic equality (Mason & Smith, 2020). In recent years, attention has been paid to the factors and influence of women in family empowerment (Abreha, Walelign, & Zereyesus, 2020).

2.2 Women Entrepreneurship and WeChat

Articles related to WeChat and women discuss mostly women's health topics such as the feasibility of WeChat to improve infant and young child feeding in rural China (Wu et al., 2021)., access to human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine information through the WeChat platform (Su, 2020) and social media Weight Management Program (WeChat) (Chang, Chattopadhyay, Li, Xu, & Li, 2021). Other articles focus on the influence of WeChat, such as the relationship between WeChat voting and canvassing (Zhou, Yu, Chen, & Zhou, 2020)., but research on female entrepreneurship and WeChat is lacking, such as Chinese immigrant women entrepreneurship on WeChat (Zani, 2021) and many more.

2.3 Muslim Women and Business

Many Muslims around the world are successful entrepreneurs, and their Islamic teachings urge their followers to engage in innovative and entrepreneurial endeavors (Tri Ramdhani & Anggadwita, 2016). Gender and economic empowerment have received much research attention. Most are based on politics and sociology, while others focus more on economics, development, and the regulatory environment (Asad Sadie & Al-Ghazali, 2010; Mackintosh-Smith, 2010). In Islam, entrepreneurship is defined as an individual's behavioral resources to seize opportunities by optimizing available opportunities, in line with religiously mandated work ethics (Hammawa & Norashidah, 2016). In Islam, economic activity is not only for prosperity and profit, it also increases the faith and piety of the believer. The success of Muslim entrepreneurs can be achieved by demonstrating personal integrity at work; this will help the individual meet any challenges while protecting them from prohibited business practices that violate Sharia (Anggadwita et al., 2017). In short, Islam encourages believers to engage in entrepreneurship (Machmud & Hidayat, 2020).

3. Methodology

In-depth qualitative interviews were used in this research where according to Edward and Holland (2020) in-depth interviews can provide an in-depth understanding of an event and at the same time provide interviewees with a voice so that they can express their own opinions, which reduces the opportunity for researchers to impose their own opinions. Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within ("themes") of qualitative data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012)

The authors conducted in-depth interviews with 8 respondents from Lanzhou, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Yunnan. The respondents were aged 26-39 and had been engaged in WeChat business for 5-9 years. The interview method used by the author is mostly a 30-50-minute interview in a coffee shop. The authors use the methods of notes and audio recordings to record and write codes. When coding the text, the author uses the subject headings and subject phrases of the text as the code names and contains the second-level code and the third-level code under it.

Table 1. Interviewees' Background

Interviewee	Age	Origin	Occupation	Years in business	Education
1	39	LanZhou	"Tianfang Lisa "Entrepreneurs	9	High school
2	35	NingXia	WeChat Brand Entrepreneurs	9	No formal education Ningxia Islamic Institute
3	33	YunNan	Muslim product Entrepreneurs	5	Undergraduate
4	26	NingXia	""Xiuying Figo" Muslim Hijab	6	Primary school Ningxia Islamic Institute
5	34	XinJiang	Barbie rabbit slimming	5	High school Linxia Arabic School
6	38	NingXia	Maxcare-Diapers-Mother and Baby Products	5	Middle school Xian Arabic School
7	26	NingXia	Muslim hijab	8	Middle school Ningxia Islamic Institute
8	28	YunNan	Bird's nest	5	Master of International University of Malaysia

4. Findings

This section analyzes three aspects of the research questions: Q1- What are the factors motivating women to become online entrepreneurs? Q2- What are some of the approaches they use to market their products? Q3- What are the challenges they face when starting and sustaining their business?

4.1 Q1-The Factors Motivating the Women to WeChat Entrepreneurs

Motivational factors for Muslim women to start a business can be roughly divided into several factors: increasing family income, access to entrepreneurial education opportunities, simplicity, and low investment.

4.1.1 To Increase Family Income

Making money is the main motivation for women to start a business. Women increase household income by earning money. These similar reasons are shared by the majority of the respondents, especially respondents I1, I2, I3, I4 and I5

> *I1: I have been in business since graduation, and contacting WeChat is to follow the trend. For entrepreneurs, it is possible to create wealth by seizing a good opportunity.*

> *I2: I am a businessman and a mother of three children. I have been doing business online before. WeChat business was very popular at the time. I saw that this platform was more profitable, so I came into contact with this new type of sales method.*

> *I3: Compared to my previous job, micro-businesses make more money. My profit from selling products is at least 30-50 yuan. Single item price is high. Profits will be higher. Since I am currently engaged in WeChat business, it is the main business.*

> *I4: Doing WeChat business is to make money. The ability of women to earn money is really important for family change. Women change step by step, even if they earn 1,000 or 2,000 yuan. I still want women to work and do the best they can.*

> *I5: Our slimming products are very profitable on WeChat. When I was choosing a product, I thought it was a good product and I could make money. I am now making a million a year.*

4.1.2 Experience in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship experience and education are reasons why they have ventured into business. These were agreed by respondents I2, I4, and I5 about how they needed this experience to increase their skills and experiences.

> *I2: Knowledge is lacking for me, and I have learned a lot of areas that were completely blank before my entrepreneurial journey.*

> *I4: At My primary school education level, it can be said that there is no culture. I started as a part-time catering worker and then worked in a kindergarten for a while. Later, I started my own business, but in this process, I deeply realized that I have to learn too much, and it is difficult for us to compare with those who learn fast. Even though I'm smart, I haven't even established basic knowledge, and I'm lacking in thinking and logic. What I lack most now is knowledge.*

> *I5: I graduated high school with no higher education. For me, there is a lack of access to education. Starting*

a business on WeChat allows me to learn product knowledge and sales skills. This is important to me.

4.1.3 Easy Access and Low Initial Investment

WeChat entrepreneurship satisfies two major conditions for female entrepreneurship, one is simple and easy to operate; the other is low initial investment. Muslim women entrepreneurs interviewed agreed that these are what attracted them to use WeChat to start their businesses.

I1: We have first-hand sources. It used to be a Muslim hijab, but now it is mainly a Muslim long skirt. It is very convenient for us to use WeChat, and we have products to send to Moments. Hair ties are promotions and customers will consult you.

I2. The investment in agency micro-business products is tiered. Just started as a primary agent for 3,000 yuan, and later decided to be promoted to general agent.

I5: WeChat business threshold is very low, anyone can do it. You can advertise on your <u>Moments</u>. Different levels can be proxies, that is, how much profit. You can start with a small agency and make a little money.

I6: WeChat business investment is not high. Our agent is several thousand yuan, and the total generation is also 20,000 yuan. It's not high, but it's a career.

I8: I planned to sell bird's nest when I was studying. Find micro-business channels. I only invested 20,000 yuan, and I sold it on WeChat, and I got my principal back in a month.

4.2 Q2-Strategies They Use to Market Their Products

The WeChat strategies they used were mainly focused on the support of their friends, by giving free samples for customer to try their products, through online business training and relationships with other entrepreneurs.

4.2.1 Relying on Their Circle of Friends for Business Support

Relying on their circle of friends for support is one of the most important ways for WeChat merchants to sell.

I1: This brand was founded by me. When I advertise in the circle of friends, many people will come over and ask if they want an agency. In this way, everyone sells my products in their own circles. I now have new Muslim dresses, Muslim crafts, and prayer rugs all posted to Moments for sale.

I2: Post on Moments on time every day, 9 am, 1 pm, 4 pm, and 8 pm. Because more people are watching the circle of friends during this time. When customers see that I have posted products on Moments, they will come to me for wholesale.

I5: Send products, comparison charts, and your experience to the circle of friends every day. Everyone will see and they will reach out to you if the need arises.

I6: Sharing products and life is my main selling method. You send product information and feedback to the circle of friends, and more people will know about your product.

4.2.2 Sending Free Trial Package

In the process of selling products, many merchants will choose target customers to send trial packages, so that customers can reflect on the product and then consider whether to buy it. This sales method brings a lot of customers and agents to the micro-business.

I4: I have a new style of my product, I will give it to my friends, and they will introduce their friends to buy.

I5: I am very fat after giving birth. I tried this product when I saw it. It is really good. I just decided to resell this product. Now that I think about it, it's worth it, and our sales are okay.

I6: At first the Maxcare brand was useless to me. A saleswoman gave me a trial pack, which I didn't intend to use at all. The promotion girl called and urged me many times before I used it. It was only later that I found out that it was really good. Probably for this reason, I sent this product to my circle of friends. On the one hand, I became a small agent, I used it at a lower price, and then I considered selling it. I didn't expect many friends to come to buy the product.

4.2.3 WeChat Online Business Training

Online tutoring offers a new form of support for women's entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs can gain knowledge and professional skills regardless of space and time.

Learning the system and new information on WeChat is important because it helps them learn about business and sales techniques.

I2: The company is very formal, the agent training is comprehensive, and the price is standard. Women's private goods talk about pathological knowledge such as cervical erosion, gynecological inflammation, and health knowledge. For me, these trainings are very necessary, not only for the job but also for my knowledge. Now with these lessons, I know a lot and it's very beneficial for kids and families.

4.2.4 Relationships and Emotional Support with Other Entrepreneurs

Close relationships and good leadership with other businesswomen are crucial for business success and harmony says a majority of the women entrepreneurs. They also learn through each other and they build relationships as new strategies to build their business.

I5: I am mainly responsible for leading the team. The agents headed by me include Qinghai, Xinjiang, Zhejiang, Henan, Ningxia, and Yunnan. These teams have team leaders. The focus of my daily work is to communicate with the team leaders and give them some ways to deal with problems and solve problems in the team. My main purpose is to bring the whole team well. If we have a big team, we have a WeChat group. I will notify you of major events in the group. For details, I will communicate with the high-level president, and then copy it layer by layer. My agents are cohesive and take things seriously. A large part of it is 1. Really make money. Staying at home with nothing to do, no income, now you can make money in this way. This is the maximum stickiness. 2. In fact, for many women, emotional value may be more urgent. In this group, they have found a way to make up for their previous confusion. Such groups generally have relatively low levels of education and low cognition.

I6: Maintain good relationships and closeness with agents. Because you are their role model, you can say that her sales are related to you, and at the same time, you should also care about her life and emotional problems. Women need to speak and resolve. As a leader, I am often a good listener. They will give me feedback and feel very comfortable after chatting with me. I think it's not just partnership but sisterhood.

4.3 Challenges of Running a WeChat Business

These women entrepreneurs face some challenges, such as balancing managing their business and the relationship between family and work, improving women's self-awareness and persistence.

4.3.1 Balance between Family and Work Relationships

Balancing family and work are challenge for women entrepreneurs.

The women all agreed that it is a difficult feat to balance between work and family but they agreed that these challenges have made them have better relationships with their family in the end despite having a rather difficult start. Some even attributed it to a higher regard by the family because of they owned a business.

I2: *I work with my youngest son. He is only 5 months old. I pack, ship, shoot videos, etc. while taking the kids every day. If the child is good today, I will have more time. If the child is not feeling well today, then I focus on taking care of the child.*

I3: *WeChat is the way to make money for my main business. But family is the center of my life. When you take care of your family, try to take care of your family, and do a micro-business when you have time. I think it's a balance, but that balance is also important.*

I6: *I feel like I'm trying to balance the relationship, but actually have regrets. The years we started were too busy. I don't have time to take care of my eldest daughter. When you grow up, you find that your child will be impatient. Now I'm gradually letting go of work and focusing on my three children. Making money is important, but family is always a woman's focus. In the process of accompanying the child, the mother cannot be absent. Otherwise, the impact on the child is huge.*

I7: *It is difficult to balance family and work. My child is still young and I can't do anything when I am sick. There's still a lot going on, and sometimes it takes days to process.*

4.3.2 Requires Patience and Persistence

Doing business requires patience and persistent decisions, which are important for WeChat business operations.

I2: WeChat business is easy to do, but not many people persist. Mainly, many people are anxious because they think that they have worked for a few months and have not made any money. Or feel that you are not capable enough. But to be honest, those who persevere have made money.

I5: There are a lot of people who gave up WeChat business, and many people can't wait for the opportunity to make money. No patience. In the process of starting a business, even if you open a store, it takes time to accumulate, but many agents of WeChat business are too anxious. There are very few agents like me who

started with the product and now have it. But we did make money.

I6: The most important thing in an industry is persistence. Some agents think that they don't seem to make much money in a year, and they want to give up. Many times, others are observing your circle of friends, maybe they are trying to buy and find that you are not doing it.

5. Discussion

Social media can promote relationship building (Wan Noordin, 2013). This research found that the main reason why Muslim women choose WeChat to start a business is to increase their family's income and change their living conditions. At the same time, the advantages of social media also attract entrepreneurs, providing technology and freedom. The findings are consistent with Chaniago & Sayuti (2022) who proposed that entrepreneurs prefer to use media technologies that are easy to use and operate. The easy operation and widespread use of WeChat are important reasons for entrepreneurs to choose it. The popularity of WeChat business has also inspired Muslim women to make money change their family's economic situation encourage them to participate in entrepreneurship. Many entrepreneurs have seen that WeChat business operations can make money. Muslim women generally have low levels of education. For them, media entrepreneurship can gain more practical experience, enrich their knowledge, and increase their social skills.

WeChat's business development strategy relies on media network relationships established through guanxi (relationships). Social media communication promotes relationship building (Wan Noordin, 2013) with others where it allows individuals to get close contact with family and friends anytime, anywhere, such as through video calls, photos, voice, and others (Raacke, & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Tosun, 2012).

At the same time, guanxi (relationship) plays an important role in WeChat business The seller's friends and family will try to recommend entrepreneurs to other relatives and friends (AlArfaj, & Solaiman, 2019). WeChat business is to rely on Moments to sell products to WeChat friends. In other words, only WeChat friends can see the entrepreneur's products and content. The first people who can buy from entrepreneurs must be relatives and friends. This is only the first step of WeChat entrepreneurship. Sending trial packs can increase the connection between entrepreneurs and customers and increase mutual trust. The influence dimension is defined as a harmonious emotion. What an individual views each other and share a common understanding and bond (Cai et al., 2017; Yen et al., 2017). Entrepreneurs and customers establish a closed emotional connection and share life, work, and family experiences with customers to achieve deeper emotional trust and dependence. Entrepreneurs investing time and energy in a relationship to build affection, and a trustworthy reputation will increase customer loyalty (Zhang et al., 2021). The author found that WeChat business provides learning courses for women entrepreneurs. WeChat entrepreneurship provides a channel for women to learn entrepreneurship, including product knowledge and marketing knowledge. Entrepreneurs benefit from the online course and practice in business. Women make up for professional defects from the system's product knowledge and marketing methods. The findings align with Gielnik, Bledow, & Stark (2020) proposal that online coaching can help women entrepreneurs, improve their self-efficacy, increase their likelihood of entrepreneurial success, and reduce risk.

The researchers found that women's entrepreneurial motivation and sales strategies can help boost the motivation to succeed and actively seek solutions to their issues. These women have the courage to change and innovate, which increases their self-efficacy. The learning of entrepreneurial knowledge cultivates their entrepreneurial knowledge and self-efficacy. Eventually sparked their interest in starting their own business. The knowledge gained from these entrepreneurship courses essentially improves their ability to identify opportunities. At the same time, the entrepreneur has a teamwork spirit and professionalism, which is reflected in the attention and concern of the superior agent to the sales and psychological problems of the inferior agent. This close partnership creates a strong sense of teamwork. Agents can gain knowledge and energy in such a concentration. Women gain leadership advancement through such teams, enhancing the drive and determination of women to start a business.

Regarding the challenges faced by women's entrepreneurship, the authors claim that they can be both a challenge and an opportunity. Many studies (Li et.al., 2023; Guzman & Kacperczyk, 2019) argue that the family is a prison for women. Social media can enhance women's social identity and liberate them from being the family. However, the values of Muslim women determine how women view the relationship between work and family. Muslim women live in compliance with Sharia law. The research results are consistent with the conclusion of Ilhaamie (2017), which states that Muslim women must also prioritize family and children and avoid excessive obligations to not jeopardize their main activities. The research found that Muslim women struggle to balance family and work. But for Muslim women, the role of family and mother is paramount. Women can start a business, but if the two are in conflict, most Muslim women will choose their family because of the influence of Islamic culture. Women need to seek the development of entrepreneurship and market trends to be successful. At the same time, they also need to pay attention to their own needs and make their own decisions. Similar to other culture, majority of women also shoulder the responsibility of

family and childcare, and therefore, the excellence of women affects the excellence of a family.

Another challenge is patience and persistence. WeChat business is simple, but entrepreneurs need to persevere and be patient to profit, because of the WeChat business developed by people. WeChat operation is not a short-term profit industry. It needs a long-term operation and consistency of activities. This also include building relationships where good cultivation of relationship coupled with quality products and services can contribute to increase in sales. Good cultivation of relationships with key stakeholders can also contribute to good reputation and that strategy is also supported in WeChat business channel.

6. Conclusion

In summary, this article focuses on Chinese Muslim women's use of WeChat to start their business, and presents the style and challenges of contemporary Muslim female entrepreneurs through a story-based qualitative research method. This article analyzes the current situation of female entrepreneurs from the perspective of entrepreneurial motivations, entrepreneurial strategies, and challenges they face. Judging from the research results, Muslim women choose to start a business because they are influenced by media entrepreneurial technology and have an urgent need to improve their family's economic level. WeChat's business development strategy relies on the establishment of relationships with customers. The establishment of a good relationship network with customers through strong relationships and emotional connections contributes to good reputation and hence the increase of sales. WeChat business operations require persistence and patience, and entrepreneurs need long-term investment to achieve considerable profits. However, these Muslim women have what it takes to succeed as they are persistent, dedicated and motivated to changed their lives. Chinese Muslim women have tenacious fighting spirit and keen insight and can grasp market drivers and trends.

7. Research Limitations and Recommendations

This article has research limitations: first, the research data of this article is not comprehensive, the data collection is relatively small and focus on one region in China. Secondly, the research method of this article uses qualitative research methods, and the research data is obtained through interviews, and the result cannot be generalized. Hence, the authors put forward several research ideas for further research: There are many aspects of Muslim women's use of media to start businesses that have not yet been researched, such as the impact of entrepreneurship on women, the standards of media influencers, and factors for the success of Muslim women's entrepreneurship. This article suggests that more theories such as relationship theory and social media theory can be used to analyze the theme of Muslim women's entrepreneurship and to deeply analyze the factors and current situation of entrepreneurs. In addition the combination of qualitative research and quantitative research can be used to extend this research further.

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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