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THE ROLE OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS IN SHAPING MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURIAL ASPIRATIONS

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Abstract: Entrepreneurial intention is a crucial factor in the success of entrepreneurship, and understanding the motivating factors for migrants seeking better economic conditions and positions in their new country is fundamental. This study aims to examine the impact of religion on migrant entrepreneurs' decision-making and intention. The researchers collected primary data through surveys that were sent to migrants across different continents. The results showed that religion has a significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among migrants. The study found that religion was a fundamental consideration for migrants when deciding on entrepreneurial intention or choice. It further revealed that culture shock is a prevalent experience among migrant entrepreneurs and business owners when they move to a new location. The research contributes to the understanding of the effects of religion on entrepreneurial intention and how it affects migrants in their new or current location. Policymakers should recognize the role of religion in entrepreneurship and design policies to support migrant entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Religion, Culture, Entrepreneurship, Migrants, Intention

Introduction:

Entrepreneurial intention and activity can be positively or negatively influenced by religion. Studies have shown that religion impacts and influences entrepreneurial decision-making and that there is a link between entrepreneurial intention and the religion practiced by migrants in their new or current location. It is crucial to understand how religion affects the decision-making of migrant entrepreneurs as it can help policymakers design appropriate policies to support them. Moreover, when migrants move to a new location, they often experience culture shock, which can impact their entrepreneurial journey. Religion and culture are our drivers of societal values, while our values are molding blocks for attitudes which also motivate basic intentions. Investigating the impact of religion and culture on entrepreneurial intention among migrants is, therefore, fundamental. This study aims to examine the impact of religion on migrant entrepreneurs' decision-making and intention across different

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continents. The research is motivated to contribute to the understanding of the effects of religion on entrepreneurial intention among migrants and propose policy recommendations to support migrant entrepreneurs.

LITERATURE REVIEW *Entrepreneurship Among Migrants*

The nature of entrepreneurship implies several images and meanings. Understanding the definitions of an entrepreneur, Inegbenebor and Igbinomwanhia (2011) define an entrepreneur as a person who has possession of an enterprise or venture, and assumes significant accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome of the enterprise. Individual entrepreneurs are perceived as risk-takers who are eager to create market opportunities and who impact economic and social systems through their innovative actions. Nowadays, the term of entrepreneurs is used for labeling a heterogeneous population which includes individuals with different motivations for starting businesses (Jayawarna et al., 2013; Shane et al., 2012). Previous research on migrants has shown that they have a greater propensity to engage in entrepreneurial activities and that they are more likely to identify opportunities than their nonmigrant peers (Vendor, 2016). Also, immigrants are found to have unique personality characteristics, such as openness to experience which leads to a different perception of the world (Bolivar-Cruz A., Batista-Canino, & R.M.; Hormiga, 2014).

While not wishing to argue that any one factor can be isolated from the others, we would note that economic development in advanced regions has long been associated with international migration, even if the nature and function of immigration has changed over time. Northern and Western European countries, for instance, were already receiving immigrants from former colonial areas, as well as predominantly male, unskilled workers from Mediterranean regions, from the 1950s up to the mid-1970s, that is, before the forces of economic restructuring gained momentum (Jan Rath, 2016). Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship are more often associated with small and medium scale enterprises. This is because the vast majority of enterprises in which the entrepreneur plays a visible role are small and medium scale enterprises (Andrew, Julius & Ishola, 2017)

Entrepreneurship has been recognized all over the world as a catalyst for development in any economy. Entrepreneurship, in developing countries in particular, is being seriously advocated because it provides employment, creates productivity, facilitates the adoption of technology, etc. In general, we consider that entrepreneurship is tightly linked to the character of the entrepreneur. Researchers consider the “entrepreneur” as an individual with different qualifications: risk taker, innovative, good manager, negotiator and so on. Consequently, when individuals are all different according to their gender, socio-cultural background or their education, we can observe a difference in the motivations for entrepreneurship and/or a difference in skills or behaviours. In general, each society is composed of different social and cultural groups. Some authors then talk about diversity or variety. This variety could be evaluated along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies (BaycanLevent et al., 2003). For others, diversity includes visible characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, gender and age, and also invisible characteristics such as creativity, beliefs and tastes (Hamper-Turner et al., 2010). We can finally add the handicap as a diversity factor when this population could undergo a discriminating behaviour in some societies.

Religion in Entrepreneurship Business Among Migrants

Most extant discussions of entrepreneurship and religion focus on the role of individual religious affiliation and orientation. Religiosity continues to demonstrate potential for impact across widespread areas of human life. There is a range of reasons why the search for associations between measures of religious affiliation and socio-

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economic development may be elusive. Trends in religious belief and activity across the globe are not uniform, and causal processes between religion and indicators of socio-economic development appear more complex than initially assumed (Andrew, 2016).

According to Beckford (2003), in terms of perceived social acceptability, religion plays a potential role as an imparter of values and societal norms. Religious identities are socially constructed, encompassing wider cultural and social considerations, and cannot be confined to the individual. As a starting point, it should be noted that sociologists of religion are not concerned with whether particular religious views or positions are true or correct; their concern is with the study of religion as a vehicle through which individuals interpret a wide variety of phenomena and are able to ascribe meaning or value to those phenomena (Beckford, 2003).

Culture shock

The term culture generally refers to a complex set of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, customs, systems and artifacts which are handed down from generation to generation through the process of socialization and which influence how individuals see the world and how they behave in it. In a business context, it can be easy to underestimate the degree to which a person's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour can be shaped by cultural influences, some of which may be relatively enduring (e.g., certain 'core' values and beliefs) while others may be more open to change (i.e., secondary beliefs and values). In the United States, for example, American citizens in LA believe in the right of individuals to bear arms and this is enshrined in the US Constitution. The buying and selling of handguns and rifles are thus acceptable within American society despite the fact that they are frequently used in violent crimes including robbery and murder. In other countries, trade in such weapons tends to be seen as highly questionable by most people and it is usually heavily regulated by the government to certain types of weapons for use in acceptable pursuits such as hunting or rifle shooting. Cultural differences such as this can, of course, apply not only to the kinds of goods and services that are consumed (e.g., eating horsemeat in France is acceptable but not in Nigeria) but also to other aspects of both the production and consumption process, and this can have important implications on an organization's behaviour.

In spite of globalization, the differences between countries in terms of products, services and customer preferences are still vast, and some scholars even argue that they are increasing (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). Relocating to a different culture is an intense experience. The variety of new information can be challenging, as familiar behavioral and cognitive scripts suddenly do not fit the new environment. In fact, the first encounter with a new culture generates such a flood of information that it is often perceived as overwhelming and stressful (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Tellingly, the first scholars of cross-cultural studies labeled this experience as "culture shock" (Oberg, 1960).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

This section reviews the research design, method of data procedure and data collection. This research has made use of primary data in the form of questionnaires using Microsoft forms sent via email and other social media platforms spread across the globe Europe, North America and Africa with a good number of respondents as migrant entrepreneurs in their current location. For the lack of capacity of reaching the sample population, this research has decided to use a sample size that is within reach of 200 with a total of 150 responses.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Frequency Table for Religious Belief What is your Religious Belief?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Christian	53	34.6	34.6	34.6
	Buddhist	4	2.6	2.6	37.3
	Hindu	3	2.0	2.0	39.2
	Jewish	20	13.1	13.1	52.3
	Muslim	73	47.7	47.7	100.0
	Total	153	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of participants' religious views is shown in Table 1. Christians comprise 34.6 percent of the population, while Buddhist's account for 2.6 percent, Hindus for 2.0 percent, Jews for 13.1 percent, and Muslims for 47.7%. The members of the Muslim faith constitute the majority of the respondents.

Table 2: Are You an Entrepreneur or Business Owner?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	87	56.9	56.9
	No	66	43.1	100.0
	Total	153	100.0	

Table 2 conforms with our objective in search of respondents who are entrepreneurs and business owners. Eighty-seven of respondents which represent 59.9 percent confirm that they are business owners and entrepreneurs in their new location. On the other hand, 66 respondents which in percentage is 43.1 gave NO as their answer to the question if they are entrepreneurs or business owners.

Table 3: Does Your Religion/Faith Affect Your Job/Business As an Immigrant Entrepreneur/Business Owner?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	105	68.6	68.6
	No	48	31.4	100.0
	Total	153	100.0	

The above table showcases the frequency distribution of migrants whose religion affects their choice of business or entrepreneurship. By this table, it connotes that 68.6 percent of respondents confirm the position that religion plays a significant role in their choice of business as migrant entrepreneurs, while 31.4 percent feel otherwise.

Table 4: Are you a Migrant?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	97	63.4	63.4
	No	56	36.6	100.0
	Total	153	100.0	

Table 3 displays the population of international migrants among respondents. The frequency number of 97 representing 63.4 percent of the respondents confirmed their status as international migrants, while the opposite

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number which represents 36.6 percent of the respondent indicated otherwise. This confirms that more than half of the respondents— approximately 64 percent—are international migrants.

FINDINGS

Findings reveal that religion affects a migrant's choice of business as an entrepreneur. In a study by Abdullahi and Suleiman (2015), their research findings show that religion has a significant impact on entrepreneurial intention. Based on our research, either as a migrant or living in your place of natural birth, religion impacts your choice of entrepreneurial decision and intention. Audretsch et al. (2007) found out that religion shapes entrepreneurial decision, with particular focus on Islam and Christianity, to be conducive to entrepreneurship. They went further in their paper on religion and entrepreneurship to say that empirical evidence based on their work suggests that both religion and tradition have strong influence on entrepreneurship and economic behavior. This corroborates our findings that religion impacts and influences migrant entrepreneurial choice, decision and intention.

CONCLUSION

From the research reviews, the majority of the respondents believed that religion has a strong influence on migrant entrepreneurship. This implies that the more religious an individual migrant is, the less likely they are to become an entrepreneur outside their birth country. It is not far-fetched to connote from research observation that an individual's religion comes to fore in taking entrepreneurial decisions for economic empowerment. This finding joins the list of researchers and scholars with comparable and related findings to the subject matter of religion and entrepreneurial decisions. The likes of De Noble; Galbraith et al. (2007); Galbraith and Galbraith (2007), David B, Werner Boente & Jagannadha Pawan Tamvada (2007); Valliere (2008); Roomi (2009); Garba *et al.* (2013) and Abdullahi and Suleiman (2015) also concluded in their works that religion both impacts and affects entrepreneurial choice and intention. The research concludes by stating that religious belief affects migrant entrepreneurs.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the revelation from this research, the researcher can equivocally recommend that religious leaders should help aid and play a strong role and path/part in migrant entrepreneurial decisions or choice. The recommendation goes further to implore sovereign governments to partner with religious groups in engineering migrant entrepreneurial choices. Further research should consider migrant culture (culture shock) and language and its effect and impact in taking entrepreneurship decisions or choices as this is not considered in this particular paper.

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