

## **Women-Entrepreneurship, Religiosity, and Value-co-creation with Ethnic Consumers: Revisiting the Paradox**

**Ayantunji Gbadamosi**  
**School of Business and Law**  
**University of East London**  
**E15 4LZ**  
**[A.Gbadamosi@uel.ac.uk](mailto:A.Gbadamosi@uel.ac.uk)**  
**0208 223 2205**

### **Abstract**

The notion of value co-creation has been a well-established phenomenon in strategic marketing. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of studies that specifically link this to women entrepreneurship and religiosity. This is the lacuna filled by this paper which is interpretive in nature and based on 11 in-depth interviews and one focus group discussion data collected from women that are members of Pentecostal faith-based organisations in London. While the paper shows many interconnected challenges faced in Black African women entrepreneurship, it also pinpoints the principal role of spirituality in fostering value-co-creation between these women, their customers, and their religious establishments. The research shows a rebuttal of the paradox of religion and entrepreneurship, specifically in women entrepreneurship. Apart from its theoretical implication of updating the literature on the discourse around entrepreneurship marketing, religiosity, and ethnic minority businesses; its managerial implications revolve around exploring socio-cultural groups to foster women entrepreneurship and economic growth.

**Keywords: Women entrepreneurship, Pentecostalism, value-co-creation, Black Africans, consumers, Business support.**

### **Introduction:**

Value co-creation between marketplace actors has become the mainstay of contemporary marketing and its increasing acceptance in the marketing parlance constitutes a key part of the changing marketing landscape in recent years. Undesirably, it is inextricably linked to entrepreneurship which, in its classic role involves combining resources in a novel way for creating something of value (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). As the field of entrepreneurship, in its broad sense, is considered a popular and fertile research area (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Gbadamosi, 2015; Odoom et al., 2017); female entrepreneurship also is incontestably a contemporary issue and has attracted a growing attention of various researchers and policy makers in recent times (Hattab, 2012; Sullivan and Meek, 2012). The unfolding argument on the topic is two-fold. On the one hand, female entrepreneurship is now gaining momentum as civilization brightens societal knowledge on roles and contributions in family and social settings. For instance, it is noted that it allows women to balance both work and family terrains (Harvey, 2005). On the other hand, it is argued that this growth still requires significant improvements if considered from the huge number of associated challenges in the society. For example, some scholars argue that women are not assertive enough in making their wishes known such as not asking for acknowledgement of their contributions (Winn, 2004). It is therefore not surprising that many initiatives are being considered and implemented on this issue across different countries (United Nations, 2012). However, the point of convergence between these two ends is that female entrepreneurship is

worthy of further research attention towards enriching the existing discourse on the subject. Given the need to have a more focused research attention, this study is not just positioned to examine entrepreneurship among Black Africans as a distinct ethnic minority group among many others in the UK but also specifically **focuses** on women segment in this group in relation to Pentecostalism, which is becoming an increasingly popular faith-based movement in this society. This is especially relevant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it has been argued that contemporary developments in the sociology of culture and **the associated discourse shows culture as** flexible and strategically created which could be used by people to makes sense of their **world** (Swidler, 1986; Lounsbury and Gkynn, 2001). Also, there are conflicting views on why some ethnic groups are more inclined to embrace self-employment than others such as cultural issues or the host business environment (Davidson, 1995; Ibrahim and Gait, 2011). While some ethnic groups have embraced entrepreneurship in number disproportionate to their population in the society, others have ignored business ownership (Aldrich and Waldinger, 1990). Simply put ethnic entrepreneurship is heterogeneous in pattern vis-a vis a number of factors including educational level and class of the people (Ibrahim and Gait, 2011). **This diversity about interest and attitudes to entrepreneurship also applies within women as it has been found that highly educated women, as a group, regard entrepreneurship as a challenge and were prepared to take risk (Mani, 2011).** Meanwhile, while, the link between religion and business has been documented in the literature (David, 1998; Weber, 2002; Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2013; Gümüşay, 2015; Gbadamosi, 2015), there is a dearth of studies that specifically link Pentecostalism, women entrepreneurship, **and value co-creation**, especially in the British marketing environment. Hence, this study is positioned to fill a palpable lacuna in the literature and enrich the extant knowledge in this chosen context.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Black African Women, Ethnic Entrepreneurship and Value co-creation**

Women entrepreneurship is a key contributing factor to the economic development of any country (Halkias, *et al.*, 2011). **However, extant** literature highlights some of the key challenges confronting it as constraints in accessing finance, funding for expansion, liquidity problem, poor financial management, sales and management problems, management inexperience and incompetence, limited social and business networks, lack of role models, cultural obstacles, and low demand level in the local market (Mayoux, 2001; United Nations, 2006; Okafor and Amalu, 2010; Bledsoe and Oatsvall, 2010). In the words of **Okafor and Amalu (2010) and Anyanwu (1993)**, the worst of these problems is malignant sexism which encapsulates issues like sexual exploitation and economic inequality. These are somewhat related to the traditional belief that women's occupational status is very much at home and they are economically dependent upon their husbands and fathers (Billington, 1978; Mani, 2011). Meanwhile, decades before this publication, Frankel (1984) also reiterates that women are more ill-equipped than men when they want to dabble into entrepreneurship and they are constrained by lack of role models, lack of business networks, and inadequate exposure to techniques of starting one's own personal business. Furthermore, from a different perspective, there is another claim that women entrepreneurship mostly revolves around the service sector (Kovalainen, 1993; McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003), which makes their ventures less attractive to banks for loan transactions (McElwee and Al-Riyami, 2003). Evidently, there appears to be an agreement in the literature that there is a good number of inhibitors to women entrepreneurship, which reiterates the claim that significant proportion of women entrepreneurship are stuck at the micro-level business while many others fold-up within 3 years of their commencement (Brunstein and Maier, 2005 in Okafor and Amalu, 2010). Meanwhile, from a broader perspective, it has been noted that minority women are

often relegated to the bottom of the labor force and are over-represented in low-skills jobs (Harvey, 2005) but the extent to which this could be generalised to all ethnic minority groups, especially the Black African women owned businesses still deserves further scrutiny.

Meanwhile, it has been noted that value co-creation emphasises mutual beneficial collaboration among the actors of interest (Kohtamäki and Rajala, 2016; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). So, an organisation's ability to co-create value is underpinned by sustained purposeful engagement (Marcos-Cuevas et al., 2016). Cossio-Silva *et al.* (2016) show that it is significantly related to attitudinal loyalty which, in turn also affects consumers' behavioural loyalty significantly. Meanwhile culture plays significant roles in our various life endeavours including consumption and entrepreneurship, especially in identifying specific groups of people and could also be relevant to how people collaborate or engage in value co-creation with others. Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) posit that while personal characteristics of entrepreneurs can explain the levels of entrepreneurial engagement, social structural and cultural factors can also provide useful explications of this phenomenon. The example of the success of the South Asians in the UK as reported by Ibrahim and Gait (2011) is relevant in this context. According to these authors, a close kinship and networking among this group fosters social capital in the form of local customers, financial and human resources (Werbner, 1990; Rafiq, 1992; Ibrahim and Gait, 2011). Meanwhile, while there have been some recorded successes documented about Black African Women in the United Kingdom (Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2013), the literature has also strikingly documented the prevalence of double jeopardy of these women as a segment of Black African ethnic minority group (Davidson *et al.*, 2010). The intersection of race and gender tends to pose a different level of challenge to the entrepreneurial engagement of these women (Harvey, 2005). This view resonates with the claim that this group of entrepreneurs are not as successful as other ethnic minority groups in this society (Ram et al., 2002). Nwankwo *et al.* (2010) add Barrett and McEvoy (2013) that black-owned establishments are likely to be in specific and vulnerable sectors that may require special interventions to survive (Nwankwo, 2005; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, how these special interventions are obtained cannot be simply dismissed as inconsequential. An example of the possible source of this dearly needed special intervention is the faith-based organisations to which these entrepreneurs belong and in the context of this study, Pentecostalism. Hence, exploring how Pentecostalism influences entrepreneurial activities of Black African women in London will be significantly advantageous both from the theoretical and managerial standpoint, and enrich understanding of the relevant literature.

### **Pentecostalism, Business Solidarity, and Consumers' Brand choice**

Exploring the link between business and religion has been addressed extensively in the extant literature to a great extent (Weber, 1930; Dana, 2010). For instance, findings show that businesses characterised with high levels of religiosity exhibit lower risk exposure (Hilary and Hui, 2009). Expectedly, there are many other contentions and postulations around this phenomenon, some of which could be positioned within the Christianity context. However, with the exception of a few such as Nwankwo and Gbadamosi (2013) and Gbadamosi (2015), this research attention is inadequately positioned on Pentecostalism. Ironically, this religious movement has been shown as a rapidly growing faith-based domain in the world (Robbins, 2004; Hüwelmeie, 2011; Haynes, 2013). For instance, evidence shows that while many other Christian denominations have closed a good number of their branches between 2008 and 2013 in the UK, Pentecostal movements have opened over 600 branches more (Evangelical Alliance, UK, 2014). This growing trend is also recorded in respect of many other countries

like Nigeria (Hunt and Lightly, 2001); Vietnam (Hüwelmeie, 2011), South Africa (Haynes, 2013), Sweden (Alvarsson, 2015), and Ghana (Daswani, 2016) to mention only few. Hence, this suggests that, to a great extent, it could logically be used as a template for the discourse of entrepreneurship and consumption.

In the review of the book of Nichol (1966), Lankford (1967) traces the historical root of **Pentecostal movement** to the decade after 1895 which also corresponds to the claim that it started in 1906 in Los Angelis (Barker, 2007) and the same year in Sweden (Alvarsson, 2015). The members of this establishment believe in speaking in tongues, and in the Holy Ghost as a source of empowerment received from above (Nichol, 1966; Kalilombe, 1997; Robbins, 2004; Alvarsson, 2015). Other parts of the special hallmarks of the movement are the networks, trust, and solidarity among leaders and membership which are remarkably strong. It has even been shown within the context of Black churches that these movements spearhead many programmes to make their mark in the wider social environment such as social, health, education, and economic development programmes encapsulating things like youth programme, income maintenance, and job training schemes (Taylor and Chatters, 2010). Haynes (2013) illustrates the bond between leaders and the congregation as the bond between a parent and a child such that believers address their pastors as ‘father’ and ‘mother’. This relationship of dependence between the Pastors and the worshipers is one of the key reasons for the expansion of this movement (Haynes, 2013). Interestingly, it also relates to the marketing transactions between members of these faith-based movements. Gbadamosi’s (2015) finding show how some branches of these Pentecostal churches in the UK do not only have business directory to encourage members to choose from when they need to make purchase decisions, but also provide various business training programmes such as customer-service to member entrepreneurs. This tends to reinforce the trust that customers within this **folds have concerning brands provided by these businesses more than those associated with equivalent offerings** from other alternative sources. The scope of networking and marketing among people of similar religious affiliation also transcends to immigration. In the words of McAndrew and Voas (2014), religion integrates and differentiates, and involvement in it appears beneficial for civic life in the US and Britain. According to them, it integrates migrants in three specific ways. Firstly, it provides a cultural identity that is consonant with a new national identity. Secondly, it fosters socio-economic participation, and the third one focuses on its role of ‘reinforcing values promoting social order’ (McAndrew and Voas, 2014: 100). As stated by Taylor and Chatters (2010), both African American and Caribbean Blacks could be deemed to have more religious involvement in comparison to their White counterparts. The same pattern is noted in Brazil. In the words of Burdick (1999: 111), a major segment of Pentecostal movement in Brazil could be described as comprising “persons at the dark end of Brazil’s colour continuum”. But another noteworthy point on this issue is the significant number of women membership of this movement. Aune (2008) states that women have outnumbered men in Christianity since the transition of industrial capitalist modernity in the West. This trend in relation to Pentecostalism has been specifically attributed to the fact that faith-healing is a key explanatory factor for massive conversion to this movement, and women are the primary care givers in families (Hallum, 2003). Meanwhile, the active involvement of faith-based organisations in the societal-oriented programmes is becoming increasingly acknowledged (Burdick, 1999; Hallum, 2003; Bart, 2007; Hula et al., 2007; Taylor and Chatters, 2010). Similarly, it has been noted that Pentecostal churches constitute a place where women pool their meagre resources together, support each other emotionally and financially during emergencies, share child-care needs, and in many instances raise their standard of living (Hallum, 2003). These views about the societal relevance of Pentecostalism portray the image of the African-Caribbean Christianity

presented by Howard (1987). Nevertheless, the extent to which this applies to women entrepreneurship within Black African and Pentecostal circles remains a blurred terrain.

### **Methodology**

This research is interpretive in nature and rests on the epistemological assumption that the subject matter of social sciences and the associated institutions are incongruous with what obtains in the natural sciences terrain. Accordingly, the data collection for this study requires a different approach that projects humans as different from the natural order (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Using purposive and snowballing sampling methods for the recruitment, and in consistency with the theoretical saturation principle (Straus and Corbin, 1998), eleven women entrepreneurs from different Pentecostal churches in London were interviewed on the topic of the research **in addition to another six that participated in a focus group discussion. As shown in Table 1, their business experiences range from 3 to 13 years and while, thirteen were married; the remaining four of them were single at the time of this study.** All of these semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Apart from adhering to the necessary ethical issues as consistently highlighted in the literature (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Moran, 2006; Scally, 2014), the necessary ethical approval was sought and granted by the designated committee in the institution which sponsored the study.

*The qualitative thematic data analysis* (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification was used to tease out the emergent themes from the data.

*Insert Table 1 around here*

### **Summary of Findings**

The interconnected themes which emerged from the study are presented below:

#### **Womanhood and Black African Entrepreneurship**

A number of related themes on the challenges militating against the growth of entrepreneurial engagements of Black African women in the UK emerged from the study. These factors indicated by the respondents can be pruned down to finance, family commitments, societal pressure, inadequate societal support, and racial discrimination. Findings show that while the women have the enthusiasm to go into business and excel in the endeavours, they are confronted with these problems that limit the extent of their expedition. They succinctly comment on some of these challenges:

I am not sure why people just think women cannot move as far as men in business. We hear this everyday and you can see how people use that to judge women in business. It puts limitation in the way of some women (R9).

...some of us are very fortunate to have been in faith but many other women especially those of our background are suffering untold family problems concerning their business. Marriage is a union of two people but imagine a relationship where the husband is not very supportive of the wife going into business for whatever reasons...it is really very common and sometimes brings frustration (R1).

The key challenge to starting a business as a woman is money to start and maintain it. There are too many hurdles for us to pass as women, which could mean that the extent of one's finance is limited. You know, taking care of the children and family, and whether you like it or not, the colour is still an issue in this environment. Things around make women especially



black women feel they are from a different world, if not for the love in Christ which we enjoy in our churches (R8).

### **Government intervention**

Respondents acknowledged that some efforts are being made by government towards encouraging ethnic minority groups into entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, they stated that more of these are required to boost women's interest and confidence in starting their own businesses.

No... that is not what I am saying. I think Government has some plans about this, but there is a need to do more especially for us as women. And something else that is important is to let people know that something somewhere is there for them about their business (R11).

Yes, they say that government want more women in business, which is fine. But I personally still believe that they can do more to help us achieve this (R5).

...I agree with that also, while we can do a lot for the society through our trades and businesses, government can also help to create the environment. By that, I mean something like finance, and business support generally (FG, R16)

### **Faith-Business Paradox and Black African women entrepreneurship**

These women specifically stated that being members of their faith-based organisations has generally enhanced their entrepreneurial engagements. They disagree with the view that entrepreneurship and Christianity/Pentecostalism are incompatible. According to them, the challenges associated with women entrepreneurship would have been insurmountable without the help of Holy Spirit which is a key factor in Pentecostalism:

That belief is in the olden days. I can categorically say that my faith helps my business, especially with the stress of coping with family matters, God has been my key strength and focus (R8).

How can making money or doing business be a sin? It is not against the will of God, those who say that are not checking the examples in the bible very well. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are examples that show that you can serve God and still be rich. Proverb 22, verse 28 or 29 says 'Seeth thou a man diligent in his business. He shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men. Chapter 12 verse 24 says the hand of the diligent shall bear rule. Business, blessing, and serving God is a good combination (R6).

They highlight a number of factors and principles that epitomise their businesses vis-a-vis Pentecostalism which principally include their faith in God in relation to their business operations, and their moral value system as women of faith. They also emphasise how they have access to divine guidance which surpasses what is obtained in the secular system.

That is the difference between us the children of God and those in the world. As a Christian, my faith is in God who commands all blessing. I have been doing business for the past 10 years and I am confident to say God has been running it for me (R7).

Faith can move mountain, so I can say it is the bedrock of my business over these years. It gives me strong determination for success all the time (FG, R14)

On the issue of moral value, findings show that participants are guided by their spiritual tenets which moderate their mores in relation to their business activities. They stress that their belief in God and membership of Pentecostal circle tend to prescribe their business principles. This basically strengthens their ethical stance about business.

Even though it may look profitable to cheat to make it in business, our faith says that we cannot do it. So, going to church or ... {being members of} the household of faith will guide us how to run the business in the way of the Lord that will still be profitable. I cannot say because I want to gain, then take what belongs to somebody else, God will not be happy about it (R3).

There must be a way of drawing the line between you and others. Apart from good customer service to keep the customers coming, I also believe that honesty in what we sell, how we sell them; and relate with other people is important and this is at the forefront of my business as a Christian (FG, R12).

### **Entrepreneurial achievements**

This study also shows that these women have made some key achievements in various ways in the society through their entrepreneurial practices. Some of these specific achievements include meeting the needs and wants of their customers through various market offerings, contributing to the well-being of their families, making impacts in their churches, and contributing to economic growth in the country. Overall, their contribution is akin to creating value for their customers and other stakeholders:

I have achieved a lot. I'm no longer a dependant in my family. It's a thing of pride that God has moved me to the next level, the level of an achiever (FG, R13).

...as we make money in business, we are able to give to the church, charities, pay taxes, and meet the need of people...I think, we (women) have achieved a lot.. (FG, R15)

### ***Business Success Attribution***

Participants stated that being members of the Pentecostal system gives them prosperity of a special kind in business. They unanimously acknowledge the help of Holy Spirit in getting directions about opportunity recognition, and emphasise that God boosts their sales and profit levels.

The Business is growing, we can pay our bills, we are doing well in this business. When I first came into this country, my initial plan was to do my accounting profession I used to do when I was in Kenya but this did not work, so God just gave me this idea, and since then it has been wonderful (R2).

Serving God brings joy and success. I have seen his hand in my business and without it, the story would have been different. He gives me inspirations on business direction and how I manage everything (R6).

### **Church-Based Intervention**

The convergent view of the respondents is that they derive various benefits from the church system which could not have been possible if they are not members of these faith-based organisations. These benefits include referral from members, various networking arrangements, and periodic training and workshops organised by the church authority to

capacitate members who are interested in going into business or doing better if they have started doing it already:

The church helps us with training on topics that could make our business run very well. We attend this regularly and it has helped me a lot. All the things they say in those meetings are very useful – customer care, expanding the current business, and other useful things (R4).

That is very helpful to me. Most of my customers are from the church. Our church encourages that and other sisters in the church recommend me to new members. There is blessing in unity (R2)

...these benefits we are talking about are all down to the church. It serves as the link to customers and most of them are brethren, I mean Christians and they also recommend me to people outside the church. (FG, R17)

### ***Value-co-creation***

A very crucial part of the findings in this study is the special relationship between these women and their customers in the various Pentecostal churches which fosters value co-creation between them in various ways. This often takes the form of contributions and suggestions of the customers on ideas of new businesses, market offerings, other specific business modalities and how they could be effectively delivered. This has now become a pattern among the parties and as indicated by the respondents, it leads to meeting of minds as they are all guided by the same spiritual ethos:

It works in both ways really. In business, you will need customers to like what one is doing to succeed, and they do come up with good ideas, new things they have seen somewhere. They just say sister, have you tried something like this? Can you do something like this? And by the grace of God, it has been working (R1)

Meanwhile, the respondents claimed that the overall spiritual guidance and favour from God help them to maintain successful relationship even with clientele that are outside the Pentecostal fold. This then depicts the phenomenon like a kind of ‘spiritual causal texture’ in which spiritual blessings in one **area leads** to several others:

The truth is that most my customers are from the church, we have that special bond. But there are other people outside the church as well. They also want good service and with all the training we get from the church special programmes, and help from God, I am able to keep them coming back (R6).

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study explores the link between Pentecostalism among the Black African women entrepreneurs in London and their entrepreneurial activities. It shows that the women are confronted with some specific challenges which work interactively to get in the way of growth for their entrepreneurial quests. These include finance, pressure from the society, racial discrimination, and inadequate institutional support. Although previous studies on this topic are not specifically focussed on women (Ram *et al.*, 2002; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2010; Barrett and McEvoy, 2013; Gbadamosi, 2015), their findings clearly support the notoriety of these stated constraints. For instance, it has been shown that Black ethnic minority group are confined to few sectors and have challenges concerning obtaining support from the mainstream institutions established to handle this issue (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2010; Barrett and McEvoy, 2013). The consistency between this finding and the claim in the literature indicates that these problems persist and demand attention towards alleviating them.



Another core finding of this paper is that these Black African women combat these highlighted and other related problems with their faith in God through their membership of Pentecostal system which significantly strengthen their entrepreneurial credential in the form of increase in sales and profits, divine opportunity recognition, prosperous competition, and other positive achievements in business. These findings are also supported in the literature but from somewhat different research contexts and subjects (Kaliombe, 1997; Taylor and Chatters, 2010; Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2013; Gbadamosi, 2015). The core argument emphasised by these authors is that Black business owners use their belief in God and relationship with God to overcome the challenges associated with managing their businesses. This present study has specially **focussed** this argument **on** women owner-managers of business.

The study also shows another stream of benefits that Black African women derive from their membership of Pentecostal movements in the studied context to include patronage and referral from co-worshippers, skill enhancement programmes organised by the church authorities, and other various networking opportunities. This is an interesting finding because it stresses how the Pentecostal churches in the UK are encouraging these women in business and those who have the aspiration of starting theirs. This **shows** the picture of ‘togetherness’ or solidarity among members which will foster business sustainability in the system. The view of Hallum (2003) on how women in Pentecostal churches work interactively to help one another physically and emotionally, lays considerable credence to this finding. Nonetheless, the present study specifically shows how these actions are contextualised to entrepreneurship among Black African women in London which is a form of extension of current understanding reported in Nwankwo and Gbadamosi (2013) and Gbadamosi (2015) that are not specific to women. Overall, the notion of double-jeopardy identified by Davidson *et al.* (2010 which is also confirmed in this study concerning being a woman and from Black ethnic minority group seems to have been ameliorated by spirituality.

The notion of value-co-creation between these women and their consumers came out so strongly in this study. This is consistent with the notion of contemporary marketing which is clearly linked to value creation. In the discourse of value co-creation, the emphasis is on the collaboration existing in the multi-actor system towards ensuring the effectiveness of such system (Navarro *et al.*, 2014; Kohtamäki and Rajala, 2016; Marcos-Cuevas *et al.*, 2016; Sjödin *et al.*, 2016)). The close connection between the consumers, the entrepreneurs and Pentecostal movement that aid these women’s business engagement is analogous to this value-co-creation in the marketing parlance. This is a departure from the claim in the literature (Bond, 2007) that the key challenge of Black businesses is the inability to work with other Black businesses and the lack of support **from** Black African customers. Perhaps, one could attribute this discrepancy to the difference in the context of the present study and the ones reported in the extant literature.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

This study links women entrepreneurship to religiosity **and value co-creation**, shows how women in Pentecostal movement use faith metaphor to define the boundary of their entrepreneurship. It also shows that the close connection they have with their customers, their faith, and faith-based organisations is akin to value-co-creation among these marketplace actors. This study has a good number of significant implications which could be summarised

and broadly categorised into theoretical and managerial implications. For theoretical implication, this study enhances the existing body of knowledge on entrepreneurship marketing, religiosity and ethnic minority as it extends these theoretical themes to women. In respect of the managerial implications, it pinpoints the relevance of socio-cultural groups in strengthening entrepreneurship as exemplified by religion in the context of this research. **These groups could be formal or informal, membership or aspirational, but they can foster women entrepreneurship.** So, enabling environment for developing entrepreneurship among various socio-cultural groups could be promoted by stakeholders such as NGOs and government to improve the current provisions made to aid business ownership and management. This could be in various forms including facilitating mentorship arrangements, and organising business skills development schemes specifically targeted at women to further enhance value co-creations among these entrepreneurs, their customers and their socio-cultural group affiliations.

### **Limitations/Suggestions for further studies**

Despite the contributions of this paper to the extant literature on women entrepreneurship, religiosity and value co-creation, it also has some noteworthy limitations. Firstly, as typical for studies conducted based on epistemological and ontological assumptions made in this study, this paper relies on small sample size. Besides, the study was conducted only in London. These constrain the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the wider population. Thus, there is a need to be cautious in interpreting the study. However, this concern does not seem to be very compelling because the study is not meant to involve testing any specific hypothesis but to build a substantive understanding of women entrepreneurship vis-à-vis religiosity, and value co-creation in ethnic marketing system.

Meanwhile, there are some promising avenues for future research on this subject. Future studies can extend the topic to other parts of the UK as a way of gauging the wider applicability of the present findings. Moreover, there is a potential great value in exploring the notion of how Pentecostalism intertwines with entrepreneurial engagements of disabled members. These suggested avenues could enrich our current knowledge on entrepreneurship and ethnicity in Britain.

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