



*Religious Beliefs and Entrepreneurial Behaviors in Africa: A case study of the Informal Sector in Uganda*



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# Motivation

- Inspired by a study done by 3 PhD students on entrepreneurship in different aspects.
- In severely resource-constrained environments, entrepreneurs often have to make decisions with incomplete information frequently relying on previous experience and social networks.
- Religious beliefs are rarely privileged in the study of entrepreneurship despite their social and symbolic power
- We know relatively little about the role of religious values and practices that underpin our beliefs on broader social processes especially within the African context.
- This study investigated how religious beliefs shape entrepreneurial behaviours.





Uganda like most African societies was organized around tribal groupings where members shared common cultures and beliefs.

The first foreign group to introduce religion in Uganda were the Muslim clerics who arrived as early as 1844. While these individuals sought trade partners, they informally converted a number of individuals to Islam.

Followed by Christian missionaries: Anglicans in 1878 and Catholics in 1879. In addition to spreading Christianity, the missionaries fostered the sense of barter trade that eventually took root between the colonialists and the natives. (Cash crops).

Today Uganda is a predominantly Christian society with up to 84% of the population Christians. Increasing Pentecostal population (11%).



## **Religion & Spirituality in Uganda**

# Religion & Enterprise Practices



Hiring People from ones faith



Crafting missions according to to one's religion, labelling products or services based on religious terms and associating the business with activities of the religion they subscribe to such as funding charity activities.



Religious institutions and faith-based organizations are spread all over the country and are involved in a wide range of activities including education, health and other civic duties.

# Findings

Framing the  
Business  
Context

Defining  
Business  
Practice

Stimulating  
Entrepreneurial  
Identity

## Framing the business Context

- *I never wanted to be a disabled person but maybe that is how God planned it to be upon my life*
- *I'm a faithful Roman Catholic, the Holy Spirit has made me successful in what I do*
- *God loves me ... we have been able to get these things, that fridge has boosted me a lot and even customers that keep coming from these neighboring university and church ...*

- Sense making tool for being disadvantaged
- Perception that beliefs are a platform for elevation or success
- Perception that beliefs are a source of provision





# Defining Business Practice

The manner in which entrepreneurs do their business is triggered by their faith. For some its at the idea generation phase, for others its useful for the implementation and survival of venture stage.



- Beliefs determine the particular type of business that they engage in.
- Beliefs determine the norms & Customs of coordinating business activities e.g. credit policies, choice of customers or markets to interact with & attitudes to business success

# Stimulating entrepreneurial Identity



- Enterprise owners business formation and practices are based on their beliefs e.g. they rely on beliefs to make major decisions and come up with innovative ideas.

Testimonies that boldness and confidence in starting and maintaining the business because of faith. Confidence is especially key when an entrepreneur has nothing to fall back on

- Beliefs fueled a drive for perseverance in business. Beliefs provide the ability for sustained action in the face of hardships.



# Conclusion



- Beliefs are critical to entrepreneurs' sense making in the informal business context. They serve as a coping mechanism in dealing with difficult personal business issues
- Beliefs play a role in providing resources, access to markets from fellow believers and perseverance.
- Some use business to promote religion. In these contexts religious values are deep seated beliefs at the core of every decision made. Businesses are used to spread beliefs while beliefs provide resilience in business.

# Conclusion



In an era of infrastructural and institutional breakdown beliefs support ingenuity.



Entrepreneurs beliefs support learning and development of entrepreneurial competencies

thank  
you

