

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

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Received: 27th August 2021

Revised: 28th November 2021

Accepted: 03rd January 2022

Abstract: The influence of religion on entrepreneurship and how it operates has been recognized since Weber. This paper will discuss this influence, focusing on Islam and its values on Algerian entrepreneurs' behaviors. However, few studies in the literature examined the interaction between Islam and entrepreneurship, particularly in the Algerian context. This religion is not treated in this study as something linked to the supernatural or transcendence but to the values that a group of entrepreneurs can refer to guide and manage their different entrepreneurial behaviors. This study examines the scope of Islamic values on the orientation of entrepreneurial actions by considering the sample of 43 entrepreneurs. The study results indicate that these values play an important role in the life of entrepreneurs in terms of decision-making and management. Thus religion is seen as a tool of trust, involvement, and social cohesion. Results show that social networks play a crucial role in creating and developing businesses. In addition, Islamic values influence the behavior of entrepreneurs towards accepting and using funding sources that do not coincide with their religious beliefs.

Keywords: Religion, entrepreneurship, Islamic values, Algerian entrepreneur, decision-making.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship and the creation or development of new businesses are driven by various factors, including the need for accomplishment, autonomy, and money. Generally, culture and social context influence these factors (Arenius and Minniti, 2005). As part of this study, we were interested in a particular socio-cultural factor that may interfere with entrepreneurial activity and affect entrepreneurs' behaviors, namely "religion." The interface between entrepreneurship and religion provides an understanding of how an entrepreneur's awareness, regarding their values and beliefs, can influence their business activities and the entrepreneurial process, such as recognizing opportunities, creating new ventures, operationalization of activities, and business growth (Balog et al., 2014).

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

The Weberian theory is an essential step to address the role of religion in entrepreneurial activity. It has been the starting point of most research, which has raised the question of the impact of religion on the development of any economic activity. According to the Weber approach, "there can be no capitalist development without a class of entrepreneurs, no a class of entrepreneurs without a moral charter, no a moral charter without religious premises" (Redding, 1990). In order to explain the origins of the industrial revolution of the XIXe century in England, and more generally, the rise of capitalism in the West, Weber relates the development of capitalist ideology with religious beliefs and, more specifically, with the Protestant ethic, explaining that business activity has had a boom in the geographic areas where this ethic has predominated.

By referring to the study of the specificity of the behaviors taught by Calvinism, the author shows that religion inculcated a way of life and thinking that promoted the development of capitalism and openness to entrepreneurship. The validity of this conclusion was questioned by several studies (Dana, 2010; Balog et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the existing literature reveals that religion, which intervenes in the constitution of behaviors and attitudes, plays an important role globally in the entrepreneur's behavior. The analysis of the religious impact on business management and entrepreneurship reveals a causal relationship.

Religion should be considered a vital cultural resource because it creates social capital and strengthens social bonds, thus bringing religion and culture closer together Dodd and Gotsis (2009). Therefore, religious and cultural stereotypes modulate and determine the entrepreneurial behaviors of each community. It also has a significant impact on an individual's motivation to become an entrepreneur (Audretsch et al., 2013; Garba et al., 2013)

In countries where Islam is the dominant religion, including Algeria, the religious dimension strongly influences the behavior of individuals. Consumers, for example, demand products and services that comply with the prescriptions of Islam (Saeed et al., 2001). It also appears that certain aspects of Islamic culture are conducive to entrepreneurship. Under the provisions of "Shariah," many entrepreneurs do not prefer using interest-based financial products. In this sense, Islamic values also influence the adoption of banking products. Many banks, mainly in MENA and Asia regions, have realized that many small businesses require Shariah-compliant banking due to their religious beliefs (Mouayed, 2017). Algerian entrepreneurs are also interested in the religious dimension as inspiration for entrepreneurship. In Algeria, as in several countries, an entrepreneurial project generally depends on the management system and the personal value of the entrepreneur, to which all of his religious beliefs must be associated.

These beliefs sometimes support the cognitive limits of entrepreneurs; however, their relevance seems challenging to prove. In this context, there has been little research on the impact of Islam on the entrepreneurial context, especially in Algeria. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate the relationship between religious and Algerian entrepreneurial behaviors. This research analyzes how Islamic values influence Algerian entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial behaviors and practices. It is about understanding the significance of Islam in the orientation of their business actions. As a search for the meaning of one's life within a human community, religion is viewed in this study as a form of inner life. This study did not examine symbolic, experiential, and sensitive aspects of people's lives. The aim is not to explain the religion in business but to provide illustrative elements of the behavior adopted by entrepreneurs, especially at the managerial level.

It was a question of identifying the motivations that led individuals to undertake and create their business projects. This analysis is based on a field survey conducted among 43 Algerian entrepreneurs operating in diverse sectors. It also investigates the influence of Islamic values and religious beliefs on their entrepreneurial behaviors. The structure of the paper leads first to present the literature review (section 2) about the religion and entrepreneurship relationship and indicate how Islam can influence entrepreneurial context. In section 3, the methodology and the different characteristics of the sample are presented. Section 4 presents the analysis and interpretation of the results. The conclusions, contributions, and limitations of the paper are discussed in section 5.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurship and religion

Historically, religions have always played a central role in helping to shape societies and, consequently, create and sustain different social systems. Religion continues to impact the behavior of individuals and, accordingly, on the economic activities in which they are inserted. The decision to become an entrepreneur is generally based on the individuals' values and principles. Therefore, it is essential to determine how religion can influence an individual's decisions. It is also necessary to understand the role of an entrepreneur and what motivates him so that it is possible to analyze this relationship.

In Schumpeter's view, innovation occurs when entrepreneurs introduce new production methods that break down technological barriers, opening up new fields of exploration, which lead to the economy's growth. Schumpeter suggested that an entrepreneur is motivated by various factors, including the possibility of profit, growth, capital accumulation, the dream of founding a particular project, the desire to prove one's worth and achieve success. The socio-cultural environment, therefore, was considered extremely important for an entrepreneur.

Interest in the cultural aspect has been gaining ground in studies on entrepreneurship (Hayton et al., 2002). Studies that address this relationship seek to understand and verify factors such as values, symbols, and behaviors on entrepreneurial activity. However, specific cultural values are associated with aspects related to religion. Religion imprints specific characteristics on entrepreneurial initiatives since it teaches, promotes, and propagates a value system in a given society (Dana, 2009; Smith et al., 2019; Dana, 2010).

The initial evidence on the interaction between entrepreneurship and religion is present in the work of Max Weber, where it is reported that there were shared values and behaviors between the best qualified and consequently the best-paid. The common characteristics referred to discipline, valorization of saving money, and appreciation for work (Weber, 1930). Weber goes deeper into the analysis and focuses on each religion, thus identifying that they followed Protestantism. From the moment Protestantism preaches work as a duty, the Protestant Christian works with great determination and dedication, as his vision of his work is not merely interested in receiving something in return but having love for what he does. Therefore, the result is a typical value of religion (Weber, 1930). He concluded that the values of Protestantism were essential to the development of capitalism.

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

Weber's analysis of this relationship has been expanding in recent decades and is composed of different views on the relationship between Entrepreneurship and Religion. Given that religion is a socio-culture dimension and helps shape the vision that people have about the environment in which they live, it intervenes in the formulation of managerial thinking, which leads it to influence the behavior of managers (Burack, 1999). Thus, differences in entrepreneurial action could be described based on cultural and religious factors (Zelekha et al., 2014).

Several studies have focused on the role of religion in the different entrepreneurship stages. Some studies interested in the intervention of faith in the individual's decision to start a business project (Audretsch et al., 2007; Valliere, 2008; Carswell and Rolland, 2007), while others tried to understand how religion mediates in the creation and exploitation of opportunities (Valliere, 2008; Carswell and Rolland, 2007). In addition, we find other studies examined this relationship in terms of entrepreneurship projects' success or failure (Bellu and Fiume, 2004; Ibrahim and Angelidis, 2005; Weber, 1930).

Dana (2009) showed how religion and entrepreneurship are connected. These studies considered that: (a) different religions value entrepreneurship in different ways; (b) different religions produce different patterns of entrepreneurial behavior due to differences in their sets of values (c) specialization in a particular religion determines entrepreneurship; (d) the relationship networks between members of a specific religion delimit entrepreneurship; (e) religion offers entrepreneurial opportunities; (f) religious beliefs can hinder entrepreneurship, and (g) religions have mechanisms for the perpetuation of values that facilitate or hinder entrepreneurship.

Globally, multiple factors and criteria are likely to influence the entrepreneurs' behaviors. In the cultural sphere, religion has a prominent position, as, as a doctrine of life, it affects the decision-making of individuals and, consequently, of societies and countries. However, this influence differs from one environment to another, from one country to another, and within the same country as well. It also defers from a socio-professional category to another.

2.2. Islam and Entrepreneurship

The influence of religion on the entrepreneur's behavior is not yet clearly proven because the research remains very limited. Islam is one of many religions studied for its impact on entrepreneurship, but a few studies have examined this religion (Block et al., 2020; Ramadani and Dana, 2015), especially the empirical studies (Balog et al., 2014). In addition, the existing literature mainly focuses on Western Christianity as it evolved and rarely examines other religions (Gundolf and Filser, 2013). In this context, two main positions have been taken by studies.

The first concluded that it is harmful to the economy and the economic activity of individuals. As in Schumpeter's approach, the development of capitalism is identified with the dynamism role of the entrepreneur who brings a perpetual transformation, and then Islam does not encourage this type of personality. These studies go so far as to argue that Islam is the religion that is least conducive to business and entrepreneurship (Rafiq, 1992; Zingales, 2006) and that Islamic institutions are the cause of the non-development of the economy of many Muslim countries (Kuran, 2004). They consider that to comply with

the provisions of the Qur'an (Holy Book), entrepreneurs in Muslim countries sometimes hesitate to integrate innovations into their businesses or entrepreneurial projects.

The second, however, claimed that Islam positively affects the business or, at least, does not hinder it. Numerous studies have shown that Islam does not promote fatalism more than other religions but rather encourages business opportunities (Farid, 2007; Ratten et al., 2017; Gursoy et al., 2017). Gumusay (2015) argues that Islam promotes innovative thinking by promoting consensus and analogy with Shariah laws. Creativity and entrepreneurial skills are encouraged in Islamic teachings (Omri et al., 2017).

Thus, from a study carried out on the population of New Zealand, Carswell and Rolland (2007) concluded that religion cannot have any adverse effect on entrepreneurship and that, on the contrary, in some cases, it influences it positively. The same conclusion can be found in Audretsch et al., (2007) study, which shows that Islam and Christianity are conducive to entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2013). It appears that research on the role of religion in entrepreneurship was designed through the investigation of entrepreneurship from an Islamic perspective.

Regarding the relationship between Islam and the main foundation of entrepreneurship, it is essential to note that, from the 7th century, Islam greatly assisted in the emergence of private property, liberated initiatives, and changed social relations. Islam as a religion does not conflict with entrepreneurship; on the contrary, it encourages work and lawful profit (Kayed and Hassan, 2010). Several researchers have associated religious entrepreneurs with qualities such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty (Baharun and Kamarudin, 2001).

All these values are put forward in the Qur'an and the hadiths; the set of speeches and actions of Prophet Muhammad; and in Islamic ethical principles as well. Islam does not appear to hinder growth or a burden on development, as has been claimed. Similarly, a study among immigrant communities in London shows that the Muslim community has a greater propensity for entrepreneurship (Basu and Altinay, 2002).

Immigrant entrepreneurs from the Maghreb region in Montreal were studied in Stambouli's thesis (2017). Results show that their products and even manage their businesses based on their religion (Islam). Therefore, their entrepreneurial behaviors rely on ethical and religious values, which serve as a foundation for trust, reputation, and networks. As Islam is acknowledged as a managerial level, it can influence various goals of the company (Bhat, 2014).

Since work is an integral part of religious beliefs, Islam has helped people become more entrepreneurial because entrepreneurship is essential. This culture and the values of Islam have influenced several sectors, among them the banking sector, which is subject to enormous influence. Many studies underlined that the religious dimension presents one of the main criteria banking products preference for Muslim entrepreneurs (Tara et al., 2014; Adeyemi and Zare, 2015; Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2013; Sedkaoui, 2019).

By analyzing the products of Islamic banks in five Arab countries, including Algeria, Demirguc-Kunt et al. (2012) concluded that only 48% (35% in Algeria) know this type of service. In their studies, the authors identified that only 2% of entrepreneurs used an Islamic banking service, which explains the poor marketing of products from Islamic banks (Beck et al., 2012). Human relations are the basis for business

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

practices in the Islamic religion, governed by Allah (God) (Ahmed, 2009). Therefore, as we have shown, Islam requires that entrepreneurs adhere to a specific code of conduct known as Shariah. So entrepreneurs must adhere to a complex set of values and norms, as well as religious prohibitions.

After reviewing the literature on the influence of religion, and Islamic values in particular, on entrepreneurship and business, we will, in the following sections, examine their impact in the Algerian context.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data and Sampling

Presenting a methodological approach to studying religion in relation to entrepreneurship requires a brief overview of Islam in Algeria. Algerian society is at the heart of a proliferation of religious offerings through different currents of Islam, such as Sunni, Sufi, Shiites, and Salafist, in addition to a Christian minority, which leads to religious competition as there is a plurality of spiritual thoughts. Even if the majority is Muslim (about 98%), this diversity has shown how much it was linked to the logic of liberalization, which has led to an entrepreneurial fiber touching all social categories, especially since Algeria began its transition to a market economy. Several economic reforms have been launched and have particularly affected the private sector, restructuring of the banking system, facilitation of imports, and privatization of public enterprises (Sedkaoui, 2019). This state and transformation justify the interest in the effect of religion on entrepreneurial behavior.

The influence of Islam on the Algerian entrepreneur's behaviors, precisely the implication of religion in business, encompasses many peculiarities and challenges. It reaches critical dimensions and intersects with questions about business, primary societal debates, and religious beliefs. An empirical strategy has been employed to assess the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship in Algeria, and a questionnaire, a data collection tool, was developed following two phases. In the first phase, to define the study sample, we relied on the interview method because of the absence of a database of entrepreneurs in Algeria. The interview method allowed exploring the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors expressed by five (5) entrepreneurs about religious values and beliefs and their effects on entrepreneurship. The interviews served a dual purpose: to explore and validate certain items that would form the questionnaire, which constitutes the second phase of the empirical strategy.

The establishment of this questionnaire was based on the combination of previous studies and the qualitative approach (interview). The questions include the entrepreneur's profile, the business project, the entrepreneurial trajectory, the religious values and beliefs, and their influences on their decisions and entrepreneurial behaviors. Based on the authors' network (personal contacts), a database of 104 entrepreneurs was established. It contains entrepreneurs who have created their professional activity in Algiers. Forty-seven (47) questionnaires were returned, and only 43 (41.34%) were considered suitable for analysis. Therefore, the study was carried out with 43 entrepreneurs from Algiers city. Several criteria may characterize these entrepreneurs, mainly: (i) the fact that they are founders and are therefore able to describe the influence of religious values on their entrepreneurial behaviors, (ii) the availability of entrepreneurs to collaborate, and (iii) the diversity of business sectors. It should be mentioned that

domestic activities and cooperatives were eliminated, considering that these scenarios have rather specific modes and contexts of creation and management, which we cannot cover in the context of this study.

3.2. Sample Characteristics

The description of the characteristics of entrepreneurs can be identified based on five variables: gender, age, education, marital status, and business sector, presented in table 1.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

<i>Variable</i>		<i>Nbr</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	M	27	62.79
	F	16	37.21
Age	<18-24>	3	6.98
	<25-34>	18	41.86
	<35-44>	11	25.58
	<45-54>	9	20.93
	>55	2	4.65
Education level	Primary or Middle School	5	11.62
	High School	12	27.91
	University	26	60.47
Marital Status	Single	6	13.95
	Married	31	72.09
	Divorced	4	9.30
	Widowed	2	4.65
Business sector	Agri-food	14	32.55
	Construction	10	23.26
	Service	12	27.91
	Other Sector	7	16.28

Source: Authors' elaboration

The evolution of the Algerian economy towards a market economy has put forward the figure of the entrepreneur as a motor for the country's development (Sedkaoui, 2019). Results in table 1 indicate that entrepreneurs aged between 25 and 45 present more than 67% of the sample. Observing the percentage by gender, we notice that the presence of men in this sample (62.79%) is more significant than the woman (37.21%), suggesting a greater tendency for Algerian men to lead an entrepreneurial project. This result is not surprising because many GEM reports have demonstrated over the past years that there is a more significant predominance of males among individuals who are entrepreneurs.

The results indicate that most entrepreneurs are married (more than 72%), while single entrepreneurs present only 13.95%. Marital status plays an essential role in business decision-making. Related researches show that marriage plays a stabilizing role in the entrepreneur's profession. The business sectors of the 43 entrepreneurs are mainly Agri-food, service, construction, ICT, Industry, and retail trade. In this context, it should be noticed that the nature of the activity carried out depends on the gender of the entrepreneur. Women entrepreneurs, in this study, tend to conduct businesses in service-related fields such as retailing, education, textile, and consulting. At the same time, men are more likely to undertake Agri-food, industry,

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

construction, and technology. This choice impacts other variables, such as the size of the enterprise and its outcomes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. How Islamic Values Influence Entrepreneurial Behaviors?

Entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth is well established; an entrepreneurial economy is dynamic and innovative. In the current economic context, in particular, facing the various crises that have shaken the economy worldwide, entrepreneurship is now positioned as a growth lever for a country. It increases its economic level, income, and social context, mainly by reducing unemployment. According to Joseph Schumpeter, an entrepreneur is a major player in economic growth. Entrepreneurs are key players in developed and developing countries because of their contributions to job creation. The entrepreneur is also an important actor participating in economic development and social change.

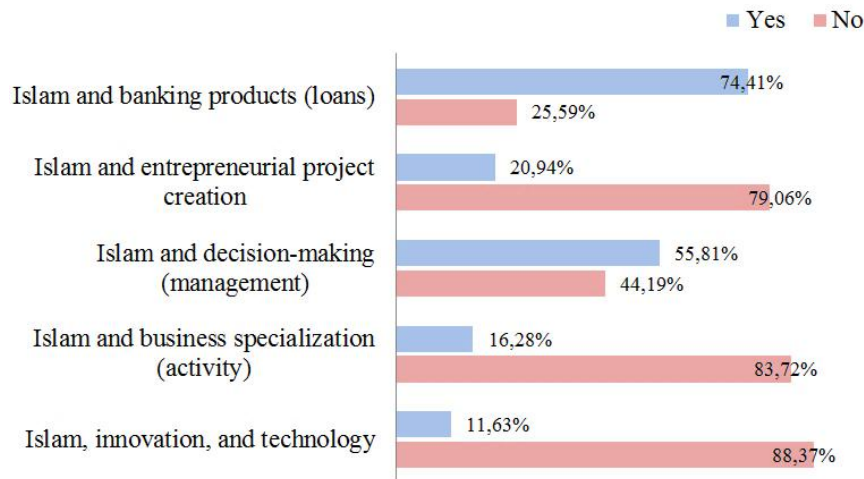


Figure 1: Influence of Islam values on entrepreneurs (%)

In Algeria, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the fight against poverty, creating regional added value and contributing to the resolution of the unemployment problem. However, despite its essential functions, entrepreneurship is confronted with several constraints: the lack of IT tools and ICT infrastructures, the fragility of their structures, the lack of funding, and the limits of government support (Sedkaoui, 2019). It should be noticed that socio-cultural factors, such as family, education, and religion, have developed successful entrepreneurship in Algeria (Sedkaoui, 2019). Regarding the relationship between Islamic values and entrepreneurship, figure 1 illustrates a global view of entrepreneurs regarding how this religion influences their entrepreneurial behaviors and managerial decisions. It shows that most entrepreneurs' beliefs influence their entrepreneurial orientation or initiatives, except for banking products.

4.1.1. Influence on Banking Loans demand

More than 74% of entrepreneurs believed that they would not use this type of banking product in their business projects or even in the development of their activity because, according to them, these products are not in accordance with Islamic precepts (Haram, which means unlawful). In this context, Rafiq (1992)

suggests that the Islamic prohibition on bank lending at interest is a barrier to accessing capital. As Mahdzan et al. (2017) explain, Islamic funding consists of small loan savings and disbursements based on Islamic banking concepts. In this sense, the entrepreneurs stated that if they need investment to develop or expand their business, they would instead rely on the partnership than resort to the bank loan because the Muslim religion prohibits this type of investment. This banking exclusion is justified by religious reasons, low income, and the high costs of banking services.

Although Muslims have the right to choose economic interests under Shariah law, Edward (2011) notes that this prohibition forces Muslim entrepreneurs to find informal funds within their community network (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003) rather than through official channels and bank loans. Regarding this point, it should be mentioned that 52% of the entrepreneurs stated that the sources of funding are self-funding, while 34% get funding from family, and only 14% of entrepreneurs admitted that their funding comes from government aid programs or banks. Many entrepreneurs have confirmed that they cannot finance their business projects based on “*Riba*” or usury (based on interest).

“...Allah has made trading lawful and forbidden usury...” (Al-Baqarah-275)

Islam views interest as a simple remuneration that does not require risk-taking or work effort. This specificity is linked to the prohibition of bank interest in Islam, making formal financing channels challenging to access, even if they are available (Stambouli, 2017). In addition, many entrepreneurs are not informed about the availability of several banking products that they can use to finance their business.

4.1.2. Influence on Decision-making and Management

Regarding the influence of Islam in entrepreneurs’ decisions towards the adoption of banking loans, a question about the integration of Islamic values in business management and decision-making was included in the questionnaire. The aim was to have a little more details regarding the importance of these values in daily business management. The impact of Islamic values on decision-making and business management has been confirmed by 55.81% of entrepreneurs, which means that many managerial decisions entrepreneurs are based on their religious values. For example, three entrepreneurs have confirmed that sometimes they resorted to “*Al Istikhara*” prayer, which refers to a prayer or meditation in which we ask God for guidance before making a significant decision), to ask God to guide them and show them the better way to act. It legitimizes their moral choices and recommends their options in a particular situation.

Islamic practices, therefore, reflect their convictions, which do not always align with business and management logic. However, other entrepreneurs believe that religion has another dimension as it aims to influence collective work and incorporate religious principles into the business’s operations. The management of relationships, or “*Muamalat*” in Islam, with suppliers and customers is also influenced by Islamic values. Islam is based on ethical, spiritual, and social values, making business relations more friendly and human. To ethical considerations, the entrepreneurs confirm that these “*Muamalat*” are based on a desire to attract customers, maintain a strong relationship with suppliers, and build a good commercial reputation. They also believe that a successful business must develop its relationship with the trust of consumers and suppliers.

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

In addition, Islamic values can regulate social relationships and avoid abuses. Entrepreneurs adopt a much more tolerant attitude towards their employees based on the foundations of Islam since they live in a Muslim country where the majority is Muslim, so the foundations of this religion already exist. There is no need to show them publically. The notion of trust is strongly considered in the management of their relationship with employees. For employees' choice, many put forward trust (88.38%) and honesty (83.72%) as the essential criteria in the recruitment decision. Many entrepreneurs also confirm that in the recruitment process, they prefer skilled individuals (72.09%). Other entrepreneurs choose their future employees among their family members, friends, or community network members (65.11%).

Table 2: The main criteria in employees' selection (%)

<i>Question</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>What is the effect of this criterion on the choice of employees?</i>	Skill	2.32	25.59	72.09
	Confidence	-	11.62	88.38
	Islam practices	16.27	67.44	16.29
	Honesty	-	16.28	83.72
	Family/Friendship	13.95	20.94	65.11

Source: Authors' elaboration

However, as shown in Table 2, entrepreneurs do not focus on the criterion related to the practices of Islamic values. According to them, it remains an activity specific to the person and the essential that the employee be a person of confidence, honest, and capable of doing a good job.

4.1.3. Influence on Entrepreneur project Creation and Business Activity

Many entrepreneurs confirmed that Islam does not influence their decision to undertake (79.06%) or determine the business sector (specialization: 83.72%). The creation of their business activity and the nature of their business sector is globally related to entrepreneur's vocation, their field of interest (especially for university graduates), the previous experience in the same activity, the desire to create their action, the desire to increase personal incomes, their motivation to create job opportunities, notably to help their relatives (Sedkaoui, 2019). Most of them realize that starting a business means recognizing managerial and family responsibilities, taking initiatives to create their jobs, and increasing their incomes, considering their capacities and resources. For Muslims, working is a religious obligation when they are in good physical health. The following figure allows visualizing the most frequent words in entrepreneurs' answers.

As shown in the previous figure, work is valued in Islam and the "Qur'an". The work ethic in Islam is based on virtues contrary to illegal enrichment (Kayed and Hassan, 2010) because the man with his physical and intellectual capacities has the mission to make fruitful the available resources. Many entrepreneurs expressed their faith and belief in God when faced with desperation, whether during the development phase. This desperation sets in at different stages of the business. It is generally caused by the difficulties encountered, the financial problems, the rent declines, and the country's economic reality.



Figure 2: Keywords cited by entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurs realize that their expectations do not meet the business results in this situation. This is where religion intervenes (such as prayer) as a refuge to recharge the battery (as said by an entrepreneur), reduce the intensity of disappointment, and ask Allah for guidance in finding a solution. The importance of God (Allah) in business life can be visualized in Figure 2 as the most critical word cited by entrepreneurs. If they cannot overcome these difficulties, even after asking or praying for many days, it is God's plan because Muslim individuals, especially believers, have faith in God's plan. However, other entrepreneurs noted that God would guide them in any situation and depend on the entrepreneur's reaction. One of the entrepreneurs has cited the following Qur'an verse:

"Work, and God will see your work, and so will His Messenger and the true believers" (Al Tawba- 105)

This entrepreneur stated that he would trust God if he faced a difficult situation (*Tawakul*). It confirms that an individual must do whatever work and do his best in any case, and God will help. An entrepreneur must be self-confident because it is an essential characteristic of a successful entrepreneur to find a solution, like changing his activity, relocating his business to another location in the same city, moving to another city in the country, etc. The more important thing is not to give up.

4.1.4. Influence on Innovation and technology Uses

As indicated in the literature review section, some studies considered that entrepreneurs in Muslim countries are sometimes hesitant to incorporate innovations into their businesses to comply with Qur'anic requirements. Therefore, this point of view will be exported in this part to see if Algerian entrepreneurs share the same way of thinking. For this, the questionnaire of this study integrates a question about innovation and the use of technology. As shown in Figure 1, most entrepreneurs (88.37%) expressed their desire to develop their business activity through innovative ways or services, whether by introducing a new way of commercialization, new services, opening new markets, etc. Moreover, Schumpeter (1965) associates innovation with creating a new market.

According to an entrepreneur who carries out his activity in the development and IT solutions, entrepreneurs working in the same geographic area compete against each other, encouraging them to innovate, which is very beneficial to this discipline. The same opinion of 4 other entrepreneurs (2 consulting, one educational, and one commercial) indicates that due to their business nature and to market needs, they must integrate IT tools and innovative solutions. They consider that Islam has a stronghold in the past because of its emphasis on spiritual and material innovation and Ijtihad or diligence, which means

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

Careful and persistent work or effort, and the pursuit of science. They also prefer these tools for economic and financial reasons. Many entrepreneurs have confirmed that they use social networks (Facebook), digital platforms, Websites, among others, to communicate with their clients and suppliers and for marketing reasons. Hence, entrepreneurs confirmed that Islamic bases encourage finding financing solutions to overcome difficulties and challenges.

4.2. Entrepreneurs' Attitude toward Islamic Values: Discussion

Another question was addressed to the entrepreneurs to examine if all entrepreneurs' business reactions are based on Islamic commandments and if they refer to Islamic values in any action related to their entrepreneurial business. The question is open-ended: "Did Islam values influence all your entrepreneurial behavior, regardless of the situation?" and the entrepreneurs must answer by yes or no. This question is related to another question that invites the entrepreneurs to estimate the degree of this influence; low, medium, or high. Entrepreneurs have to argue their answer (yes or no). We included this element to allow entrepreneurs to justify their choice, as we did for many other questions. It should be mentioned here that many entrepreneurs did not justify their choice and preferred to answer the question without arguments. It should be noticed that only 22 entrepreneurs (51.17%) stated that they conduct all their entrepreneurial actions and orientations based on their faiths and Islamic values and that God is present in their different business paths. The rest of the entrepreneurs (48.83%) claimed that they sometimes decide and manage their entrepreneurial activities without referring to Islam values. The following figure shows the results of the analysis.

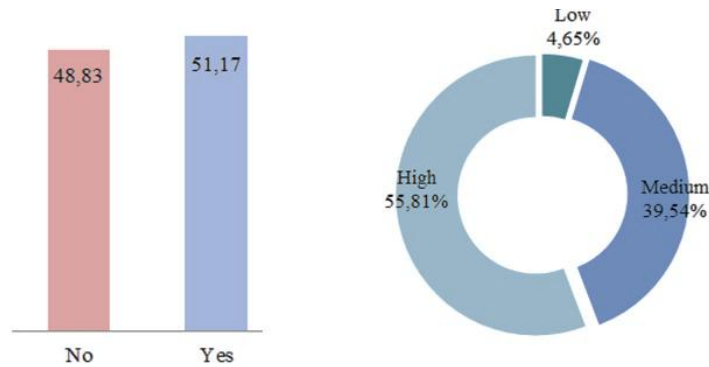


Figure 3: Islamic values and Entrepreneurial behaviors from entrepreneurs' point of view

Figure 3 shows that more than 55% of entrepreneurs believe religion significantly impacts their businesses. In comparison, only 4.65% think religion has a low impact, and almost 40% assume that their faiths have a remarkable medium influence. Among the 43 entrepreneurs who answered this question, only 21 gave their arguments, while others preferred to maintain their point of view (without arguments or justifications). These 21 arguments, therefore, were classified by category regarding the entrepreneurs' answers. This classification is combined with other variables and summarized in appendix 1. The results show that some entrepreneurs adopt perceptions and attitudes respecting Islamic values in promoting their entrepreneurial projects. This attitude is independent of the characteristics of their businesses.

Based on the information in appendix 1 and the keywords cited by entrepreneurs in Figure 2, we can say that women entrepreneurs believe more than men in Islamic values' influences. It is confirmed by Essers

and Benschop (2009), which indicated in their study that women entrepreneurs can make room for individualism, honor, and entrepreneurship within a framework of respect for religious norms. Due to its influence on the entrepreneurial path, especially the individual's social orientation, age has been the subject of several studies (Lévesque and Minniti, 2006; Kautonen et al., 2014). Entrepreneurs who acknowledge the connection between entrepreneurship and religion are over 25 years old. Note that this variable depends significantly on the socio-cultural context of the woman (Sedkaoui, 2019).

Numerous entrepreneurs disagreed with those who stated that Islam's values had nothing to do with the world of business. This category of entrepreneur refers to those who have respect for religious freedom, and as a result, it has no impact. For them, Islam instills a confident drive to work based on effort, which can be seen in ethical aspects. According to the information illustrated in appendix 1, we can conclude that the influence of Islam in business depends on the entrepreneurs and their business nature, starting with the historical context, where reaffirmation and recognition rely on a situation in which religious identity can be made public. It should be mentioned here that there is also a stronghold of the informal in commercial activities, which confines companies to small sizes, blocking their growth and development (Sedkaoui, 2019).

The entrepreneurs' reasons illustrate how Islamic values raise ethical issues that affect how individuals do their work (refrain from abusing, stealing, or lying) and create the desire to achieve financial results. Although religion is undoubtedly a fundamental element of individual culture, it is obscure to the point where it acts directly on the economic behavior of the various actors (Gundolf and Filser, 2013). Also, the difference between the older and the new generation marks distances between religious perceptions and practices in Algeria. For the older generation, Islamic values are more important in social relationships. For example, going to mosques on Fridays, getting married, not having premarital sex, among others, the social fields of citizen participation are more secularized for the new generation.

Not all people are so religious, even if there is a generational difference in Islamic values and beliefs. The spiritual fabric in Algeria comprises people who practice Islamic beliefs (prayer, fasting, almsgiving) and those who do not. In Algeria, everyone is free to practice; the religious issue can also be socially controversial. Synthetically, we can say that religion impacts entrepreneurship by influencing Algerian society relationships because many entrepreneurs think that the invisible religious support is not just for the business's growth. It is also for the survival of the enterprises, especially since religious values are seen as the result of social integration (Tracey, 2013; Ahmed, 2009). Contrary to McCleary and Barro (2006), religion is a significant social force.

As stated in Dodd and Gotsis's study (2007), the Islamic values and the Algerian entrepreneurs' beliefs could only be integrated to support the entrepreneur's desire and motivation or even deal with several business challenges. They talked about the faith that God guided the decision and the timing of doing something, such as creating a business or making a decision. According to the entrepreneurs, Islam can provide an integrated business community as part of the entry-level negotiations and improve an ethically coherent, shared, and long-term focus for the management and direction of the business over time. Graafland et al. (2006) stated that religious traditions are built by individuals and not by religion; religion is perceived as a collective normative referent. These constructions influence their practices and daily actions.

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

Interestingly, the relationship between religion and entrepreneurship has always been understood from a unitary conception of religion. We have always sought to grasp the influence of "religion," as a unitary entity, on entrepreneurship and enterprise. Entrepreneurs must overcome many challenges over time. It refers to their ability to go beyond standard principles, namely bureaucracy in the Weber sense. So religion is seen here as organizational learning that does not result from situations that entrepreneurs desire but rather from a religious, moral philosophy that determines the position. In addition, running a business in an Algerian context requires, among other things, knowledge of spiritual and cognitive elements, which often affect management processes, leadership, planning, customer service, and relationships with suppliers.

Therefore, despite modern development theories and the general consideration that Islam is inherently anti-development and that a religion-based entrepreneurial culture is a foremost obstacle in promoting dynamic entrepreneurship, the results of this study indicate the opposite. There is no evidence of the incompatibility between Islamic values and entrepreneurship. The lack of business dynamism in Algeria cannot be attributed to adherence to Islamic values and business ethics but rather to the government's inability to assimilate entrepreneurship's involvement and integrate Islamic values in its development process (Sedkaoui, 2019).

5. Conclusion

This study provided an understanding of how Islamic values contribute to and interfere with the practice of commerce and business in Algeria. The results revealed the impact of Muslim identity, religious beliefs, and ethics on the behavior of the entrepreneurs in question and on the entrepreneurs concerned. The results allow underlining this contribution and understanding the influence of Islam in the Algerian business context. Results show that funding is one of the significant issues for Algerian entrepreneurs and a vital factor of any phase of their entrepreneurial process. The Algerian entrepreneurs rely mainly on their capacity and family networks to create and fund their businesses. Their funding strategies are framed by Islamic precepts, which affect the adoption of banking loans. The literature on ethnic entrepreneurship supports this specificity.

When it comes to corporate identity construction, marketing is closely linked with entrepreneurship, and results show that religion's values and ethical principles are clearly of interest to the entrepreneurs. They also have a social-relationship-based business strategy built around customer, employee, and supplier trust. In terms of business management and the role of religious values, the study's results indicate that Islamic precepts continue to impact entrepreneurs and their decisions. The study also shows that Islam influences the entrepreneur through its values and norms and affects his/her entrepreneurial orientations and strategies. Therefore, this study clarifies the importance and the influence that socio-cultural factors have on entrepreneurs. It contributes to understanding entrepreneurial activities' social roots and attests to the extent of social aspects in the enterprise.

The topic of this study is not easy to explore or analyze since religion is a complex subject to broach. Furthermore, the boundaries between the "beliefs" and "practices" of each entrepreneur were difficult to discern. Although this study revealed some interesting results on the entrepreneurs' assessment in Algiers city about the influence of Islamic values, several limitations should be considered in future research.

Studies relying on entrepreneurship and religion in Algeria with a more expressive number of entrepreneurs would be interesting to make the conclusions more consistent. In addition, we believe that this study could be improved and completed by comparing several Algerian cities or other communities, such as the Kabyle region (Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia cities), where there are different religious contexts (Islam and Christianity people). Other ideas include studying the behavior of Algerian consumers so that the analysis of religion's influence would be limited to entrepreneurs and extends to customers.

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Appendix 1: The classification of entrepreneurs’ arguments regarding the influence of Islam beliefs on their professional behaviors

Answer	Classification	Gender	Age	Activity	Reason	Authors’ interpretations
No	Distinction between religion and business	M	<25-34>	Technology development	“No, it has nothing to do with our work; it is something very independent of work.”	* There should be a clear line between religion and business, as they are two separate things that should not interact.
		F	<18-24>	Agri-food	“No influence, at least in my company, and religious beliefs are independent of my business.”	* Different things, with different logics.
		M	<35-44>	Medical equipment sales	“it is completely independent”	* Coexist with the mental structure of individuals separately.
		M	>55	Spare parts	“Religion is very different from what I do in my work.”	* The difference between a company and a person has two distinct positions: As a family business, religion has no influence, but as an individual, it may.
		M	<25-34>	Drinks sales (Soda, juice)	“Not much, because it is not the sale of alcohol which goes against my religion, but it is separate.”	
		M	<35-44>	Agri-food	“My family is very religious, but I see no influence because we already have our consumers, especially during religious festivals.”	
		M	>55	Wholesale	“I attend to all individuals with	* Being modern is supposed to have more

The Influence of Islamic Values on the Algerian Entrepreneurs' Behavior

				candy sales	respect in my beliefs. When I can, I thank God, but it does not influence much."	respect for freedom and different ways of thinking * Having a trans-religious perspective as a professional can help you treat people of different Islamic beliefs. * Not influence clients, suppliers, or employees. People are free in making-decision.	
		M	<35-44>	Catering services	"We try to be professionals: we treat a Sunnite or Salafist in the same way.		
		F	<25-34>	Consulting	"No, everyone is free to do what they want."		
	Religion occupies a private and intimate space	M	<25-34>	Commercial	"To be honest, no. In my businesses, and I only care about my incomes and my business."	* Religion occupies a very personal space, involving only the believer and what he cares about, and no other people or other beliefs. * Thus, religion is idealized and becomes a personal activity, distinct from the business. * The Islam values and beliefs are s still practiced, but it is separate from business activity	
		F	<18-24>	Education services	"The most important thing is to deliver good services, and this is more ethical than anything else."		
		F	<18-24>	Sale of clothes	"We do not put anything religious here, but we believe that God guides us."		
		F	<35-44>	Textile	"No, but we ask God every day. We are only Muslim, and it is personal."		
	Yes	Religion influences moral issues and the behavior of the entrepreneurs	F	<45-54>	Education	"It is true that religion is important in promoting moral values. We must instill honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and respect for others."	* Some values are characterized by a convergence of meaning and, in some cases, transcendental natures (they do not exist in isolation of the social level). * Religion can also be an ideology that justifies and maintains differences and intolerance with other individuals. * The Islamic festive has influenced daily life, for example, during fasting month (Ramadan). * Religion, as a set of norms and ideals, allows people to self-regulate in the actions of collective life.
			F	<35-44>	Textile	"Yes, it is a fundamental requirement for our employees."	
			M	<35-44>	Industry	"Yes, because of the way we conduct ourselves."	
F			<35-44>	Consulting	"Yes, when there is a celebration."		
F			<25-34>	Travel office	"We consider that it is an important factor in our ideals faith. I want to make the world a better place for others."		
Religion influences as an articulator of achieving business goals		M	<35-44>	Construction	"Yes, because there is the belief that God exists and helps when you need Him most. For example, when I get up, I trust God that everything will be better. It was God who made it happen."	* Faith in God and believe that it can provide solutions for businesses and entrepreneurs. * Islam beliefs are considered as a decision-making guide. Islam Religion regulates the imagination of entrepreneurs' believers and their behaviors. * The structure of religious representations is given in popular faith: firstly, it is God, later, hierarchical.	
		M	>55	Commercial	"Our company is the base, and since God asks us to act truthfully, honestly, and without eagerness, since He promises us provision if we obey Him		
		F	<45-54>	Services	I ask God when things go wrong, and I give some Zakat (money or something) to people in need		

Source: Authors' elaboration