Gordon Institute of Business Science
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The influence of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution in internationalisation

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of the metaphysical in the understanding of international business phenomena has, to date, been somewhat neglected. Furthermore, the scholarly work on the influence of religion on strategic internationalisation decisions requires refinement. In addition, the understanding of location choice and entry decisions taken by women-owned enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa is nascent. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of religion on the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises in South Africa. The study drew on institutional theory (in particular, the cultural-cognitive institution) to ground the research. A qualitative research method was employed in the analysis of 13 semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with women owners who identified as religious. The interviewees' answers pertaining to their personal and business experiences provided a rich description of their religious beliefs, values and practices. These influences were found to be relevant to their enterprise decisions. However, religion was somewhat less influential in specific internationalisation decisions, particularly in the location decision. The location decision was influenced by the co-existence of economic and religious influences and included non-religious networks. The influence of religion in entry decisions was most evident in the pattern of internationalisation. The researcher posits a possible religious influence in the unsystematic pattern of internationalisation of the enterprises.

KEYWORDS

Internationalisation decisions, religion, unsystematic pattern of internationalisation, women-owned enterprises

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in International Business at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Name & Surname   Signature

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BASA:	Banking Association South Africa
CAQDAS:	computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
GCC:	Gulf Cooperation Council
God Almighty:	God, G-d, Gods
MNC:	multinational corporation
NIE:	new institutional economics
NPO:	non-profit organisation
SMEs:	small and medium-sized enterprises
USD:	United States dollar
WEF:	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1   Introduction

This chapter introduces the main research question and proposes a rationale for its academic and business relevance. In order to convey this imperative, the following areas are discussed: a) the background to the research problem, b) the theoretical research problem and gaps in the current scholarly work, c) the business relevance, d) the aims and purpose of the research, e) the contribution and f) the scope of the research. These dimensions are discussed in relation to the research topic, which is the influence of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution in the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises.

In their work, Busenitz and Lichtensteiin (2019) consider the Latin word *veritas,* which means truth. They assert that there is a responsibility on the part of researchers to understand the true meanings and relationships in their academic work. Neubert (2019) enriches the discussion by suggesting that omitting religion in the discovery of truth leads to an attenuated view in social science.

1.2   Background to the Research Problem

Neubert (2019) provides evidence for this assertion – the scholar explains that religion is important to the majority of the world's population. The scholar explains that 90% of the global population identifies with a faith, despite declining church membership in the United States (Jones, 2019). Globally, of those who identify with a religion, the following religious faiths are most prevalent: Christianity (31%), Islam (23%) and Hinduism (15%), with Judaism contributing 0.2% of the globally religious (Pew Research Center, 2015).

In addition, recent data indicate that 71% of people in the world have a belief in God Almighty (Gallup International Center for Public and Political Studies, 2017). In a 2016 World Economic Forum (WEF) survey, 21% of individuals indicated that faith and religion are the single most important factors informing their values (Miller et al., 2019; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2016).

At a global level, the World Economic Forum (2016) has indicated that values are oftentimes underpinned by faith. Values provide somewhat of an ethical and moral basis for actions by global actors. The following quote informs the discussion: 'Values cannot be justified by the intellectual process alone. Faith must be involved' (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 5).

Having established both prevalence and relevance of religion globally, the sub-Saharan context is noted (Pew Research Center, 2015). The religious dynamics in this region are evident in Table 1 below. This table informs us of the projected growth of religious groupings in the region (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Table 1

Growth of Religious Groupings in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2010 – 2050

Size and Projected Growth of Major Religious Groups in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2010-2050

	2010 ESTIMATED POPULATION	% IN 2010	2050 PROJECTED POPULATION	% IN 2050	POPULATION GROWTH 2010-2050	% INCREASE 2010-2050	COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (%)
Christians	517,320,000	62.9%	1,112,390,000	58.5%	595,070,000	115.0%	1.9%
Muslims	248,420,000	30.2	669,710,000	35.2	421,280,000	169.6	2.5
Folk Religions	27,010,000	3.3	61,470,000	3.2	34,470,000	127.6	2.1
Unaffiliated	26,240,000	3.2	50,460,000	2.7	24,220,000	92.3	1.6
Other Religions	1,920,000	0.2	3,740,000	0.2	1,830,000	95.3	1.7
Hindus	1,560,000	0.2	1,900,000	0.1	340,000	21.6	0.5
Buddhists	160,000	< 0.1	220,000	< 0.1	60,000	38.1	0.8
Jews	100,000	< 0.1	70,000	< 0.1	−30,000	−28.9	−0.8
Regional total	**822,730,000**	**100.0**	**1,899,960,000**	**100.0**	**1,077,230,000**	**130.9**	**2.1**

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050. Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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71 Sub-Saharan Africa includes 51 countries and territories. To see the estimated size of religious groups in specific countries in 2010 and 2050, see table starting on page 234 or online sortable tables at http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projection-table/.

Source: Pew Research Center (2015, p. 163)

With reference to Table 1, there appears to be somewhat of a consensus between the sub-Saharan and global trends in respect of a) growth in religious identity and b) inter-religious shifts in the numbers of the faithful. As is evident, the absolute number of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to double by 2050 (from 517 million in 2010 to 1.1 billion in 2050). In addition, four out of every 10 Christians globally will reside in this region in 2050 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Globally, Christians will grow in

number, from 2.1 to 2.9 billion people between 2010 and 2050, which is a projected 38% growth (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Notably, Islam is also projected to experience significant growth globally, with nearly equal numbers of those of Christian and Islamic faith projected by 2050. This trend is somewhat mirrored in the sub-Saharan data evident in Table 1. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of Islamic faithful is projected to increase from 248 million to 670 million by 2050. However, it should be noted that the relative shares (and not absolute numbers) provide an additional insight. By 2050, Christian share of the total sub-Saharan population will decrease from 63% to 59% in 2050, and the Muslim share is projected to increase from 30% to 35% (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Protagonists of secularism suggest that religion in the world is declining both in number and relevance (Tracey et al., 2014). This assertion is **not** supported in Figure 1 below (Pew Research Center, 2015). In Figure 1, it is clear that the share of the global population that does not affiliate with a religion will decline from 16% in 2010 to 13% in 2050. (Affiliation is understood as meaning those who identify with a particular faith group.) In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of unaffiliated will remain largely constant and is 2.6% of the total population (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Number of people, 2010-2050, in billions

- 2.92 billion
- 2.76

Christians

2.17

Muslims

During the next four decades, Islam will grow faster than any other major world religion.

1.6

1.38
1.23

Unaffiliated
1.13
1.03 Hindus

The unaffiliated population will increase by nearly 10% in the decades ahead. But ...

Buddhists
0.49   0.49
0.40   0.45
Folk Religions

Other Religions
0.06   0.06
0.01 Jews   0.02

2010   2050

% of global population, 2010-2050

Christians
31.4%   31.4%

29.7

Muslims

By 2050, Christians and Muslims will make up nearly equal shares of the world's population.

23.2

Unaffiliated
16.4
15.0   14.9
Hindus
13.2

... from 2010 to 2050, the religiously unaffiliated will decline as a share of the global population.

Buddhists
7.1
5.9   5.2
Folk Religions   4.8

Other Religions
0.8   0.7
0.2 Jews   0.2

2010   2050

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050
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Figure 1

Table of the Global Decline of the Religious Unaffiliated

Source: Pew Research Center (2015, p. 81)

Given that this research is about women-owned enterprises, it should further be noted that religion appears to be more important to Christian women than men in the United States and this is reflected globally (Fahmy, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center (2014), 72% of Christian women shared that religion is very salient to them, versus 62% of Christian men in the United States. This data was confirmed by the Pew Research Center (2016), which indicated that women were more likely than men to be affiliated to a religion in many countries globally, among Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish faiths. A number of nuances should be taken into consideration. For example, in respect of daily prayer, Muslim men pray daily to the same

extent as women, and among Orthodox Jews, men pray more often during the day than women.

% of U.S. Christian adults who say ...

	Men	Women
Religion is very important	62%	72%
They believe in God with absolute certainty	72	80
They believe the Bible is the word of God	72	78
They pray at least once a day	60	74

Source: Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014.
"America's Changing Religious Landscape"

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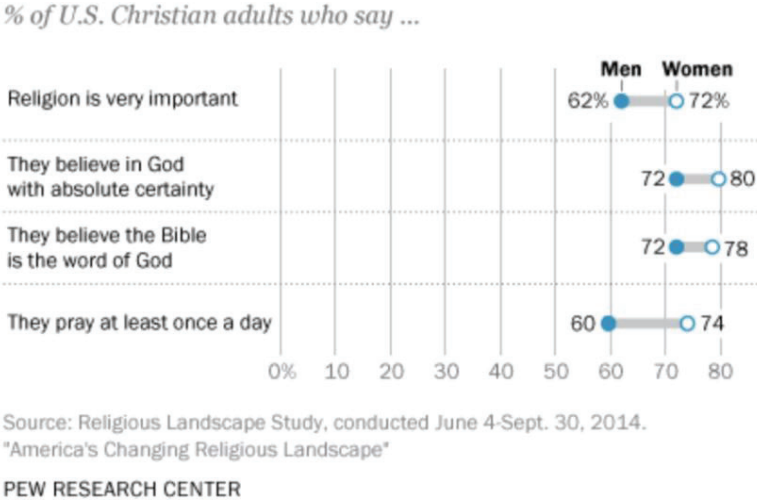
Figure 2

Religion is More Important to Christian Women in the United States

Source: Pew Research Center (2014, p. 51)

While it appears that the relevance of religion in society is waning (Tracey et al., 2014), the extent of global religious affiliations indicates the unequivocal importance of religious constituency (Gallup International Center for Public and Political Studies, 2017; Miller et al., 2019; Neubert, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2016). In addition, along with the prevalence of religious affiliations (understood as referring to people's identification with a particular faith group), the significance of religion to its followers and, in particular, women is important to note (Pew Research Center, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2016; Smith et al., 2021). Finally, the relevance and prevalence of religion is important in business because enterprises comprise individuals, and many of these individuals hold their respective faiths as salient (van Buren et al., 2020).

1.3 Research Problem

As may be expected from the contextual evidence in Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2, some scholars have suggested that academic interest in religious influence has been rekindled (Block et al., 2020; Deller et al., 2018; Miller et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2021). However, Smith et al. (2021) opine the use of economics as a theoretical base for understanding phenomena to date in management scholarship. Neubert (2019) believes

that because of this, scholars are limited by normative constraints, whereby only material and natural viewpoints are deemed acceptable.

There are multiple streams of institutional theory (Aguilera & Grogaard, 2019), and the body of work in institutional theory is significant. Despite this, the scholarly body of knowledge requires further refinement. The work on the cultural-cognitive pillar of neo-institutional theory, first espoused by Scott (1987), also requires further understanding (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; North, 1991).

Scott (1987) laid the theoretical foundation in the description of this institution. The author, supported by other scholars, posits the cultural-cognitive institution as one that incorporates shared beliefs, perceptions and the construction of meaning at a societal level (North, 1991). Barnard and Mamabolo (2022) further suggest, on the basis of Scott's (1987) formulation, that religion is a cultural-cognitive institution. However, the rekindled interest by scholars in religion or 'theological turn', described by Smith et al. (2021), does not appear to extend to business management research.

Busentiz and Lichtenstein (2019) further posit the 'co-inherence' of faith into academic research and business. This 'co-inherence' means that principles of faith are manifest in material contexts (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020). The principles of faith may be the religious belief systems, religious values and religious practices of individuals and enterprises (Henley, 2017; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020; Neubert, 2019). However, the absence of the 'theological turn' in management science research means that 'co-inherence' in international business ought to be further understood (Smith et al., 2021).

Neubert (2019) agrees that this historical approach by scholars may not be beneficial if a deep understanding of management phenomena is the goal. To more deeply understand religious influence, religious belief systems should be considered (Pejovich, 1999). There is currently debate about the influence of faith, in particular, the ability of religious belief systems to create enabling milieux in internationalisation (Richardson & Rammal, 2018). These scholars posit that belief systems create a spiritual comradery but are not supported in the literature by other scholars (Jimenez et al., 2019).

In addition, the influence of religious values on the behaviour of both enterprises and individuals would serve to provide a deeper understanding of religious influence (Henley, 2017; House et al., 2002; Neubert, 2019; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). The interface of

religious and personal/business values appears indistinct (Henley, 2017). However, scholars contend that religious and entrepreneurial values are oppositional (Rietveld & Hoogendoorn, 2021). The practice of faith, and its incorporation into internationalisation ventures, is discussed in an Islamic context by scholars (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020). In addition, it appears that women entrepreneurs who internationalise their enterprises are primarily understood through the lens of Islam in the literature (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021).

According to Busentiz and Lichtenstein (2019), decisions are not entirely explained by facts. However, it appears that the influence of religious belief systems, religious values and religious practice on internationalisation decisions is not well understood (Henley, 2017; House et al., 2002; Jimenez et al., 2019; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020; Neubert, 2019; Richardson & Rammal, 2018; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021).

Reuber et al. (2018) have debated the relevance of international business theory to explain the internationalisation behaviour of small enterprises with scarce resources and which are in the early stage of internationalisation in developing countries (Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018). The authors posit that international business theory does not explain the behaviour of this typology of enterprise and market (Reuber et al., 2018). They suggest international entrepreneurship as an alternate theoretical lens (Reuber et al., 2018). In respect of the specific internationalisation decisions that need to be made by business owners, the location decision and the entry decisions are salient, notably: a) the mode of entry, b) the level of commitment and c) the pattern of internationalisation (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019).

The influence of religion on the location decision appears to be inconsequential (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Li, 2018; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2019). However, scholars posit the value of networks in location decisions in internationalisation (Nyuur et al., 2018; Vahlne & Bhatti, 2019). Religious networks appear to substitute for the lack of formal institutions, but further understanding is required of the influence of religious networks on internationalisation per se (Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021).

In addition, the Uppsala model of internationalisation has recently been the subject of debate in the international business literature (Vahlne & Johanson, 2019). It has been posited that this model of proximal, incremental internationalisation does not explain the myriad of market and enterprise typologies as well as a non-linear pattern of

internationalisation (Surdu et al., 2020). The inability of the Uppsala model to explain patterns of internationalisation is debatable (Gammelttoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018; Surdu et al., 2021; Vahlne & Bhatti, 2019; Vahlne & Johanson, 2019). However, the Uppsala theory is partially supported by Younis et al. (2022), who posit a regional, religious pattern of internationalisation (Richardson, 2014).

The religious influence on mode of entry and level of commitment does not appear to be well understood, although Younis et al. (2022) suggest that a low-risk mode would concur with the Islamic tenet of only engaging in low-risk business activities. Furthermore, scholars Richardson and Ariffin (2019) explain that a stronger orientation to faith does not increase the level of commitment on entry in internationalisation.

The management science research, to date, has not disaggregated data on gender (Jafari-Sadeghi, 2021). Women create and operate businesses globally (Brush et al., 2019; Bullough et al., 2021; Hechavarria & Ingram, 2019; Moreira et al., 2019). Despite this, there is a scarcity of research into the experiences of women in international business (Brush et al., 2019).

Given the research problem outlined in this section, it would be useful to ask the question 'How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?'

1.4   Literature Gap

The gaps in the literature, therefore, pertain to the following: a) religion as a cultural-cognitive institution (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; Scott, 1987; Smith et al., 2021), b) 'co-inherence' of religion in internationalisation decisions (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019) and c) the relevance of the Uppsala theory of internationalisation (Vahlne & Johanson, 2019).

1.5   Research Aim and Purpose

The first aim of the research is to understand the influence of religion on internationalisation, including strategic internationalisation decisions. The second aim is to explore where religious beliefs, values and practices are visible in the business enterprises.

1.6   Academic Contribution

This research contributes to the body of knowledge about religion as a cultural cognitive institution (Aguilera & Grogaard, 2019; Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; North, 1991; Scott, 1987). It also contributes to the international business literature by introducing further insight into religious influence in internationalisation (Henley, 2017; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020; Neubert, 2019; Smith et al., 2021).

The construct of religion will be operationalised through a study of a) religious beliefs, b) religious values and c) religious practice (Henley, 2017; House et al., 2002; Jimenez et al., 2019; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020; Neubert, 2019; Richardson & Rammal, 2018; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021).

The research will contribute insights into the religious influence on specific strategic internationalisation decisions, namely a) location decisions, b) mode of entry decisions, c) level of commitment decisions and d) decisions on the pattern of internationalisation (Li, 2018; Nyuur et al., 2018; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2019 Vahlne & Bhatti, 2019).

Additionally, the research will contribute to the international business literature by investigating the religious influence on internationalisation decisions in a multi-faith sample of women-owned enterprises, which are SMEs in a developing market context (Brush et al., 2019; Jafari-Sadeghi, 2021; Reuber et al., 2018; Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018).

1.6.1   Practical Contribution

Internationalisation has been posited as a study of distance along many dimensions (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018). The incorporation of an understanding of religion as an important element in internationalisation will assist enterprises with both strategic internationalisation decisions and management of internationalisation (van Buren et al., 2020).

The study of women in internationalisation enables a deeper comprehension of decision making in internationalisation. The insights from the study will allow stakeholders in the international business and entrepreneurial ecosystem to enrich **their** understanding of internationalisation, through the lens of both religion and gender. Practically, this

knowledge can support better decisions and strategies by women-owned enterprises that are internationalising their businesses. The importance of faith to women means that 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019) of religion could be developed as a tool kit for women-owned enterprises. The secondary industries that support women-owned enterprises should also benefit from this knowledge.

1.7   Research Scope

The theoretical scope of the research is confined to institutional theory (North, 1991; Scott, 1987). Within the theoretical scope of institutions, cultural-cognitive institutional theory is further investigated, with a particular focus on religion as a cultural-cognitive institution (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2020; Scott, 1987). The theoretical research scope in internationalisation is international entrepreneurship theory and the Uppsala theory of internationalisation (Reuber et al., 2018; Vahlne & Johanson, 2019). The physical scope is sub-Saharan Africa, specifically the country of South Africa. However, the women-owned enterprises domiciled in South Africa have internationalised their enterprises to jurisdictions on the African continent, in the United Kingdom, in Europe and in the Middle East.

1.8   Outline of the Dissertation

The research report comprises seven chapters and supporting annexures, which provide a deeper understanding of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution. Chapter 1 has outlined the research problem. Chapter 2 will discuss the current literature about the cultural-cognitive institution, with a secondary focus on internationalisation theory. Chapter 3 will synthesise the work of previous scholars to develop propositions and research questions. Chapter 4 posits an appropriate methodology and details the research process. The findings of the research are analysed and presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 will compare the literature and the research findings, and Chapter 7 will assert conclusions in respect of the research and literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The focus of Chapter 2 is the literature regarding institutional theory (North, 1991; Scott, 1997), since recent systematic literature reviews indicate the opportunity for further research in the cultural-cognitive institution (Moreira et al., 2019; Ojong et al., 2021; Scott, 1987). The literature, which describes religion as a cultural-cognitive institution, will be discussed in concert with that which describes religion as an informal institution (Agyeman & Carsamer, 2018; Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; Chan et al., 2022; North, 1991; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Rammal, 2018; Scott, 1987; Smith et al., 2019; Younis et al., 2022). The current discourse surrounding internationalisation theory will also be explained (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Schellenberg et al., 2018; Surdu et al., 2021), and international entrepreneurship theory is introduced as a complementary viewpoint (Reuber et al., 2018; Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018).

The influence of religion on entrepreneurship will be discussed, since the enterprises in the current study are entrepreneurial in nature (Kuratko et al., 2021; Mazereeuw et al., 2014; Smith et al. 2019). The influence of religion on the location decision, the mode of entry decision, entry level of commitment and internationalisation pattern will also be discussed since this relates to the research questions (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Garcia-Muina., 2020; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018; Onuklu et al., 2021; Romero-Martinez et al. 2019).

2.2 Institutional Theory

The body of research on institutional theory in international business is rich but continues to be characterised by dilemmas. Institutional theory comprises multiple theoretical viewpoints, which originate from disciplines both within and outside of international business. Aguilera and Grogaard (2019) have organised the main characteristics of the different perspectives of institutional theory, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

The Main Characteristics of the Different Perspectives of Institutional Theory

			Sociology	
	Old institutionalism	Neo-institutional theory	Institutional work	Institutional logics
Selected authors	Selznick (1957)	Meyer & Rowen (1977), Tolbert & Zucker (1983), DiMaggio & Powel (1983), Fligstein (1993), Scott (2013)	Oliver (1991)*, Lawrence & Suddaby (2006), Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca (2009)	Friedland & Alford (1991), Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury (2012), Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury (2011), Besharov & Smith (2014)
Institutions defined as	How institutional processes influence organizations; How organizations become institutions	Institutional pillars; Frames of meaning guiding human action	"The practices of individual and collective actors aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions"	Logics/institutional orders; Inter-institutional system; Bring society back in multi-level
Typology		Regulative; Normative; Cultural/cognitive		Family; State; Market; Religion; Community; Firm
Mechanisms	Competing values; Power and influence; Coalitions; Informal structures; Responsive regulation	Isomorphism; Legitimacy; Institutional distance; Environmental effects on organizational and cultural homogeneity	Organizational ability to change institutions; Individuals as agents of institutional change	Path-dependent; Heterogeneity; Mental schema; Attention; Sense-making/identity; Complexity
Analytical focus	Organization	Field	Individual => societal	Field and inter-institutional fields
Example in IB		Tashman, Marano & Kostova (2018)	Regnér & Edman (2014), Fortwengel & Jackson (2016)	Newenham-Kahindi & Stevens (2018)

	Institutional economics		Strategy	Political science		
	New institutional economics	Institutional analysis	Institution-based view	Historical institutionalism	Comparative capitalism	Rational choice (Positive theory)
Selected authors	North (1990, 1991)	Ostrom (1995, 2005)	Peng (2002), Peng et al. (2008, 2009)	March & Olsen (1983), Evans et al. (1985), Zysman (1994), Thelen (1999), Evans (2012), Pierson (1994)	Hall & Soskice (2001), Streeck & Thelen (2005), Whitley (1999)	Moe (1984), Weingast (1989)
Typology	Formal; Informal	Institutional diversity	Firm strategies	Institutional analysis	LME versus CME; State capitalism	
Mechanisms	Transaction costs; Agency costs; Governance structures; Political hazards	Cooperation; Principles of collective action	Entrepreneurial responses to institutional context; Drivers of strategy in IB	Path dependence; State capacity; Power asymmetries; Policy legacies; Role of ideas	Institutional complementarity coordination; Institutional layering; Institutional drift	Micro-foundations; Preferences are stable; Equilibria; Maximize preferences; Instrumental
Level of analysis	Country; Industry	Local communities; Global commons	Country => firm	Country; Public policies	Country; region; National advantage configurations	Electoral level
Key IB related concepts	Institutional voids; Quality of institutions					
Examples in IB	Child & David (2001), Holmes, Miller, Hitt, & Salmador (2013), Brandl, Darendeli & Mubambi (2018)	Aregle, Miller, Hitt & Beamish (2016)	Peng et al. (2017), Pinkham & Peng (2017)	Schneider (2004)	Witt & Jackson (2016), Judge, Fainshmidt, Brown (2014), Hu, Cui, Aulakh (2018)	

* It does not explicitly belong to this strand but it has similar perspective on the role of institutions

Source: Aguilera and Grogaard (2019, p. 26)

Two main streams of institutional theory are relevant to this study. The first is the work of North (1991), who developed the theory of formal and informal institutions, which is known as new institutional economics (NIE). The second is the work of Scott (1987), who delineated three pillars of institutions, known as neo-institutional theory.

The concept of formal versus informal institutions, proposed by North (1991), enables an understanding of human limitations in international business and 'are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction' (North, 1991, p. 97). Informal institutions may include 'traditions, customs, moral values, religious beliefs and all other behaviours that have passed the test of time' (Pejovich, 1999, p. 166). Evidence of this latter assertion can be found in the suggestion that the church is a preeminent informal institution, along with the family and the state (Arregle et al., 2021).

Dau et al. (2022) note that informal institutions may be important in the study of the internationalisation of emerging market companies. This assertion is based on the premise that **formal** institutions in these emerging markets may not be robust (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; North, 1990). Formal institutions are defined as the laws and rules in a particular country or society (Dau et al., 2022).

Scott (1987) conceptualised institutions as having three pillars, namely regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. The regulatory pillar bears similarity to North's (1991) formal institutions and comprises rules, laws and regulations. The normative pillar is built on North's (1991) concept of the informal institution and explains how prevalent beliefs, values and behavioural norms influence enterprises and individuals (Scott 1987). The cultural-cognitive pillar is the internalised beliefs and values of individuals and enterprises, which direct their behaviour (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020).

Barnard and Mamabolo (2022) suggest that religion is both a normative and a cultural-cognitive institution. The scholars explain that religion provides both individuals and society with meaning (Li, 2018).

The cultural-cognitive pillar of institutional theory is the core underpinning of this study and is discussed in Section 2.3. The cultural-cognitive institution (Scott, 1987) is relevant because concepts such as cultural and psychic distances are encompassed in this theoretical paradigm. Importantly, scholars advise that internationalisation is inherently

about distance (Srivastava et al., 2020). 'Cultural distance' is one of the most cited terms in the international business literature (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018).

2.2.1 Cultural Distance

The following definition of cultural distance may be useful to this study: cultural distance is the difference in cultural values between two different countries (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013). In subsequent research, the scholars have acknowledged the controversy surrounding this concept and definition; however, they also note that 'cultural distance' is one of the most cited terms in the international business literature (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018). The concept is, therefore, deemed applicable to the literature review.

It follows that both cultural and religious values should be defined (Bergin, 1980a; Schwartz, 1999). Cultural values are defined based on a societal level of analysis and are aligned with the foundational work of Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1999). The religious values relevant to this study are outlined in Table 3 below, adapted from Bergin's original work (Bergin, 1980a; Bergin, 1980b), and are defined based on an individual level of analysis.

Table 3

Religious Values Relevant to this Study

Theistic values
God is supreme. Humility, acceptance of (divine) authority and obedience (to the will of God) are virtues.
Personal identity is eternal and derived from the divine. One's relationship with God defines their self-worth.
Self-control in terms of absolute values. Strict morality. Universal ethics.
Love, affection and self-transcendence are primary. Service and self-sacrifice are central to personal growth.
Forgiveness of others who cause distress (including parents) completes the therapeutic restoration of self.
Knowledge by faith and self-effort. Meaning and purpose are derived from spiritual insight. Intellectual knowledge is inseparable from the spiritual. Ecology of knowledge.

Source: Adapted from Bergin (1980, p. 100a)

Richardson (2014) suggests that, at an enterprise level, religion, which encompasses **individual** religious values, may act to: a) reduce distance and b) influence the route of internationalisation. The author indicates that Muslim-Malaysian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) internationalise to jurisdictions where they can engage in

cross-border activities with other Muslim enterprises. The scholars found this pattern of internationalisation, despite differences in language and historical connections.

However, both the differences and similarities in the values found at the individual and enterprise levels of analysis may be moderated by the national culture (Cao et al., 2018; Hofstede, 1980). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain that the decisions taken by a particular company are informed by that company's national culture and the degree to which it engages with national institutions (this is referring to the country level of analysis). These decisions are then interpreted by companies in another country from the point of view of the specific national culture in which they are embedded. The perception of the legitimacy of decisions taken by either party is, therefore, partly grounded in its national culture (Cao et al., 2018) and in the cultural distance between the countries.

At the individual level of analysis, similar religious belief systems (informal institution) may reduce perceptions of cultural distance (Kwok et al., 2020; North, 1991; Pejovich, 1999). However, Kwok et al. (2020) are challenged by scholars who assert that perceptions of lower distances, on the basis of shared faith, is not present (Younis et al., 2022). Younis et al. (2022) posit a possible explanation for the latter assertion is the differing contextual religious ideologies.

The argument can be made that religion as a cultural-cognitive and informal institution may or may not influence internationalisation decisions (Richardson, 2014). Religion may or may not serve to reduce cultural distance, defined as a difference in the cultural values between countries, based in part on individual religious belief systems (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013; Kwok et al., 2020; Younis et al., 2022). However, national culture may play a role in influencing the perception of the legitimacy of internationalisation decisions (Cao et al., 2018).

2.3 Cultural-cognitive Institutional Theory

Scott (1995) described the cultural-cognitive institutional theory as that which explains the shared beliefs and perceptions of a society. Furthermore, the cultural-cognitive institutional theory explains how members of a society interpret their world and formulate their reality (Scott, 1995; Shirokova et al., 2021). This institution explains how meaning is built through a common structure, which is shared by a particular society.

As mentioned, Barnard and Mamabolo (2022) indicate that religion can be understood through the lens of the cultural-cognitive institution. Schmidt et al. (1999, p. 10) (as cited in Smith et al., 2021) offer the following definition of religion: 'systems of meaning embodied in a pattern of life, a community of faith, and a worldview of the sacred and what ultimately matters'. It also includes the 'feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviours that arise from the search for the sacred' (Hill et al., 2000, p. 66).

2.3.1   'Co-inherence'

Neubert (2019) asserts that there is a current limitation in the scholarship in the management sciences. This limitation pertains to the study of the metaphysical, which includes both the study and the influence of religion. The author explains that both secularism and religion have overlapping assumptions.

Importantly, Neubert (2019) confirms that both secular and religious scholars have a common goal. They strive to provide a better understanding of management phenomena (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019). Moreover, Neubert (2019) illustrates that within organisations, human beings are the sum of both their instrumental and immaterial natures.

The proposition that religious and secular paradigms should not be seen as mutually exclusive is confirmed by Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019), who enrich the discussion by suggesting that science and religion are complementary. Smith et al. (2021) describe social entrepreneurship as evidence of this assertion. This typology of entrepreneurial entity is created according to business principles, with the concomitant goal of arguably religious outcomes, like sustaining God Almighty's creation and creating social value for others.

These scholars refer to this as 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019). The term describes how principles of faith present themselves in material research and business journeys. The term can be extended to mean the learnings that each paradigm can gain from the other.

Therefore, it may be argued that science and the metaphysical should be integrated to form a clearer understanding of management phenomena, which are the topic of this study. The paradigms of science and religion need not be mutually exclusive; they can, instead, be complementary (Busenitz & Lichtenstein 2019; Gumusay, 2019; Neubert,

2019). The social entrepreneurship entity, which may or may internationalise, is an example of 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Smith et al., 2021).

2.3.2   Religious Belief Systems

The influence of belief systems in internationalisation is discussed by Younis et al. (2022). The depth of a Muslim entrepreneur's faith is a determinant of their ability to base their decision making on their religious beliefs. The beliefs of Muslim entrepreneurs afford them a sense of contentment about the decisions they make based on these beliefs.

Religion may be influential in international business negotiation decisions. Richardson and Rammal (2018) report that shared religious beliefs may improve international business negotiations because of a 'spiritual comradery'. This religious comradery is described as a mutual attraction on the basis of personal faith. At different times in the negotiations, differing religious beliefs also appear to enhance the negotiation process and implicit decision making.

Indeed, according to their findings, a shared religious belief system improves initial relationship building and creates a harmonious environment for the negotiation (Richardson & Rammal, 2018). This creates the potential for a more successful outcome. Their research showed that a mutual religion fosters not only an interpersonal rapport but also a rapport based along transcendental lines.

In another context, however, Jimenez et al. (2019) opined that diversity in a host country's religious beliefs has a negative effect on the success of its international infrastructure projects (when a consortium of multinational stakeholders is involved). The scholars suggest that the typically large number of stakeholders in infrastructure projects creates complexity. Furthermore, the different religious influences on stakeholders' behaviour, communications and engagement indicate an increased risk of project failure due to differing goals, according to Weber (2011) (as cited in Jimenez et al., 2019).

Therefore, as stated previously, the depth of a Muslim entrepreneur's faith is a determinant of their ability to base their decision making on their religious beliefs (Younis et al., 2022). The decision making in **international** negotiations appears to be influenced by both similar and different personal religious belief systems. This is termed 'spiritual comradery' (Richardson & Rammal, 2018). However, different belief systems among

stakeholders may also negatively influence international project success (Jimenez et al., 2019).

2.3.2.1　Religiosity

Religiosity is defined as the extent to which individuals are obedient to their religious beliefs, values and practices (Chan et al., 2022). The cognitive component of religiosity is the belief systems of individuals, and the affective dimension is the individual's emotions in respect of religious icons and religious institutions. In addition, the behavioural aspect of religiosity relates to the practice of religion, for example, by way of prayer (Mazereeuw et al., 2014).

Allport and Ross (1967) first described the concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity. Intrinsic religiosity is the orientation of being guided by an appropriate, authoritative religious text in one's faith. Extrinsic religiosity is the orientation of seeking networks and support from one's faith. Importantly, the concept of intrinsic religiosity is positively associated with business creation (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Chan et al., 2022).

As mentioned, scholars posit that individuals draw strength and inspiration from their faith (Allport & Ross, 1967; Miller et al., 2019). Religious practice in the business sphere is a tool that enables resilience. This practice may take the form of prayer and the reading and study of religious texts.

Chan et al. (2022) note that in a multi-faith Indian context, religiosity does not necessarily lead to ethical decisions. However, these scholars posit that entrepreneurs may act on a command from a higher power. Individuals who practise their belief systems may be obligated to behave fairly when making decisions and to abide by their religious duty to treat others equally (Chan et al., 2022; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014).

Karakas and Sarigollu (2019) note that religion fosters feelings of connectedness with others. The authors further assert that religion enhances the sense of collective responsibility within an organisation, helping the organisation to be mindful of the spiritual well-being of its constituents. Therefore, kinship and culpability are influential when making decisions that affect the business.

2.3.3 Religious Values

It is, furthermore, useful to focus on the construct of 'humane orientation' (House et al., 2002). 'Humane orientation' refers to enterprises that value being fair and self-sacrificing. Bajdo and Dickson (2001) found that companies that have more women in leadership positions fostered a culture in which fairness is salient.

Tlaiss and McAdam (2021) recently examined the construct of fairness through the lens of feminist, Islamic women entrepreneurs. The religious value of fairness was evident among women entrepreneurs of Islamic faith, particularly in their relationships with their employees, suppliers, partners and customers (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). These women sought to provide equal treatment to the participants in their ecosystem by behaving with transparency and honesty. The scholars demonstrated how women entrepreneurs use Islam to guide them in growing their businesses.

According to Henley (2017), religious values are important in that values are 'preconscious'. The author explains that these subconscious religious values inform entrepreneurial decisions. This assumption is supported by other scholars (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019), who argue that when individuals approach their research work, their research decisions may be influenced by their preconscious values (Henley, 2017).

Some of the literature, therefore, argues that the religious values of fairness and honesty (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021) inform a compassionate intention (House et al. 2002; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). This compassionate intention leads women entrepreneurs to engage with others with transparency. Unconscious values in individuals may also influence decision making (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Henley, 2017).

2.4 International Entrepreneurship

According to Reuber et al. (2018), international entrepreneurship is the activity of seeking opportunities across country boundaries. The construct of entrepreneurship is included in this section for two reasons. The first is that there is a dearth of literature and frameworks pertaining to the interface of religion and international business. The second is because entrepreneurial action is deemed to be inextricably interlinked with international ventures, as explained in the following section.

2.4.1 Entrepreneurship

According to Smith et al. (2019), scholars currently lack a robust theoretical foundation for, or understanding of, the interface of entrepreneurship and religion. In order to address this assumption, they developed a conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 3 below, with the intention of explaining how religion influences entrepreneurial action. The scholars assert that knowledge about religion and its importance with regard to personal identity and one's personal calling are religious influences in entrepreneurial decisions. This model, the researcher asserts, concurs with the evidence from the literature already discussed, particularly with regard to religiosity and compassionate intention (Chan, et al. 2022; House et al., 2002).
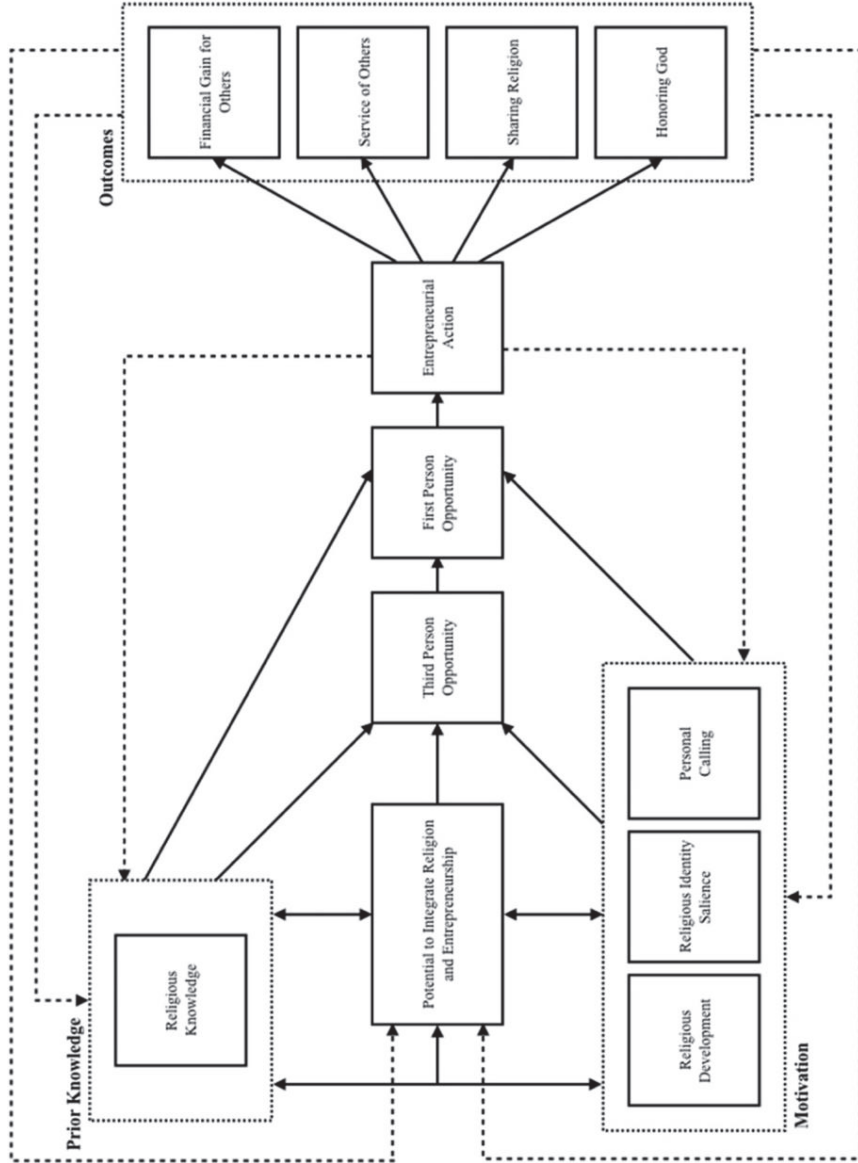
Figure 3

A Sketch of the Role of Religion in Entrepreneurial Action

Source: Smith et al. (2019)

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Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427) describe religious calling as a 'transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner orientated towards a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-centered values and goals as primary sources of motivation'. However, in the context of entrepreneurship, the lack of contribution of religion is posited in an empirical study, conducted at the country level of analysis (Ayob & Saiyed, 2020). The scholars conclude that there is no correlation between predominantly Muslim countries and early stage entrepreneurial activity. This is an interesting finding given that Islam advocates for entrepreneurial endeavours (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021).

It can, therefore, be argued that there is limited literature to explain the inter-relationship between entrepreneurship and religion (Smith et al., 2019). However, the following may be relevant influences in the understanding of entrepreneurial action: the presence of religious knowledge and development, religious identity importance and religious purpose. Despite Islam's advocacy for entrepreneurship, which is clear at the country level of analysis, Islam does not appear to be associated with early stage entrepreneurial activity.

2.4.1.1   Creation

The motivation behind the creation of a business may be based on an Islamic religious text (the *Hadeeth*). This was a key finding in a study that aimed to understand the influence of Islam on the entrepreneurial endeavours of women (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). Scholars have also reflected on the value placed on creativity in Judaism (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019).

> 'The Hadeeth says that business people or the merchants, through starting their own business, are serving God on earth through creating jobs, giving people employments and allowing them to create their own homes and have families…It is an honour and a responsibility' (Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021, p. 259).

According to Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019, p. 284), 'the Torah begins with the creation of the universe; Genesis 1 tells of this amazing work of the Creator'.

The religious constructs of creation and transformation (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019) are well documented. Firstly, the religious construct of creation, it could be argued by the researcher, is described in international business as international new ventures (McDougall et al.,1994). Secondly, the construct of transformation, it is argued by the

researcher, is manifest as the antithesis of Uppsala's (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) incremental model of internationalisation.

The religious construct of transformation may be analogous to the internationalisation process of being 'born global' (Rennie, 1993) and the more recent concept of 'micro-multinationals' (Dimitratos et al., 2003). Therefore, it could be argued that creation as a significant element of religious belief systems informs decisions about the creation of a business (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Tliass & McAdam, 2021). In addition, creation may be evident in international business decisions through an international new venture (McDougall et al., 1994). Finally, the religious idea of transformation may be relevant to internationalisation decisions in 'born global' enterprises (Rennie, 1993).

2.4.2   International Entrepreneurship

According to Reuber et al. (2018), international entrepreneurship is the activity of seeking opportunities across country boundaries. International entrepreneurship scholars assert that, by its nature, internationalisation is entrepreneurial. International entrepreneurship scholarship has most recently been challenged by Verbeke and Ciravegna (2018). The authors postulate that international business theory supports an understanding of much of what international entrepreneurship scholars allege is unexplained by international business theory.

However, international entrepreneurship scholars Reuber et al. (2018) observe that international business theory does not address the early stage of internationalisation. International entrepreneurship authors also claim a lack of evidence pertaining to individuals, as international business scholars typically undertake studies at the firm level of analysis. A final concern raised by international entrepreneurship scholars is that international business investigates large organisations and has historically failed to study businesses that are resource-scarce (Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018).

2.4.2.1   Cultural-cognitive Institutions and International Entrepreneurship

At the enterprise level of analysis, psychic distance as a cultural-cognitive institution has been defined as the aggregate of all factors that may impede the flow of information between a company and its market (Johanson & Valne, 1977). Importantly, from the point of view of the cultural-cognitive institution, psychic distance at the individual level

of analysis is perceptual. Therefore, it can be described as an individual's perception of differences, for example (Magnani et al., 2018).

Safari and Chetty (2019) confirm the prominence of psychic distance, post market entry, among SMEs. As SMEs increase their engagement, they find it increasingly difficult to develop relationships and gain access to information. The scholars concede the necessity of a 'bridge-maker'.

Chen et al. (2018) reflect on the influence of informal institutions (the human dimension) in internationalisation and the challenge of acquiring host country knowledge in a social venture. The scholars indicate that a positive home country institutional environment may constrain the enterprise's ability to cope with less favourable host country institutions.

In addition, the influence of psychic distance on export is complex. Obadia and Robson (2021) posit that psychic distance is a moderator in the relationship between cooperation and export performance. The scholars show that, contrary to generally held assumptions, extremely high levels of cooperation between exporters and importers may be detrimental to performance. For example, close cooperation may lead to group think, which stifles creativity.

However, the study found that the relationship between cooperation levels and export performance is unaffected by psychic distance (Obadia & Robson, 2021). Magnani et al. (2018) support this finding of the minor impact of psychic distance on internationalisation decisions. They confirm that the strategic objectives of an organisation may well balance out and overrule the influence of psychic distance.

Therefore, despite contrasting scholarly work, it may be argued that psychic distance is a cultural-cognitive institution, relevant to internationalisation decisions (Magnanl et al., 2018). This, it could be posited, is because the acquisition of information and knowledge in foreign markets is challenging (Safari & Chetty, 2019). Finally, the perceptual nature of psychic distance is a relevant consideration due to the definition of religion as 'systems of meaning' (Schmidt et al., 1999, p. 10).

2.4.3   Women and Entrepreneurship

There is an opportunity for further research on women-owned enterprises in international business. The research to date has not comprehensively disaggregated the data on

gender (Jafari-Sadeghi, 2021). Furthermore, many of the studies are in journals that are not of requisite quality, and, in many cases, the work is not recent (Ojong et al., 2021). Women create and operate businesses globally, and these businesses contribute economically and societally (Bullough et al., 2021). Despite this, there is a lack of research about the interdependency of culture and women entrepreneurship.

Moreira et al. (2019) expand on this topic by highlighting how inter-country differences in cultural contexts shape female entrepreneurship. Hechavarria and Ingram (2018) assert that entrepreneurial ecosystems, of which culture is a component, affect women more than their male colleagues. Brush et al. (2019) opine that entrepreneurial ecosystems affect the ability of organisations to internationalise. The work to date highlights the significance of cultural-cognitive institutions.

2.5 Internationalisation Theory

The internationalisation theory discussed in this section is the Uppsala model of internationalisation, proposed by Vahlne and Johanson (2019). This theory will be discussed particularly because there is current debate about its capacity to explain internationalisation patterns (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018).

2.5.1 The Uppsala Model of Internationalisation

The concept of psychic distance is central to the Uppsala model of internationalisation (Magnani et al., 2018). Vahlne & Johanson, (2019) assert that due to a lack of knowledge and experience in foreign markets, companies will initially internationalise to countries that are close in proximity. The enterprises will then grow through entry into further markets, in a step wise approach, based on the host country's distance from the home market (Vahlne & Johanson, 2019).

More recently, scholars have begun to question the Uppsala model of incremental internationalisation (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018; Vahlne & Johanson, 2019). They posit that the model cannot explain new paths of internationalisation, different typologies of markets and different entities (Surdu et al., 2021). The incapacity of the model to explain the location decision and pattern of internationalisation is evident (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019).

2.6 Internationalisation Decisions

The internationalisation decisions discussed in this section are the location decisions, the mode of entry and level of commitment decisions (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2020). These decisions are discussed in the relation to the cultural-cognitive institution (Garcia-Muina et al., 2020; North, 1991; Romero-Martinez et al., 2019). In addition, the relevance of networks is introduced as an element of the location decision (Torkkeli et al., 2019)

2.6.1 Location Decisions and the Cultural-cognitive Institution

De Beule et al. (2018) indicate that the following are determinants of location choice in internationalisation: market size, corruption, ease with which one can do business, costs, (un)employment, education, population size and population density. Donnelly and Manolova (2020), in their systematic literature review on the location decisions of multinational corporations (MNCs), developed a conceptual model that explains the influences at play in the location decision. They postulate that three factors affect the location decision, namely institutional factors, the macro environment and industry-firm dimensions.

The cultural-cognitive institution that influences the location decision is posited to be at an enterprise level. These scholars assert that companies seek to make sense of their environment through cognition. The scholars developed a framework to explain location decisions, as shown in Figure 4 (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020).
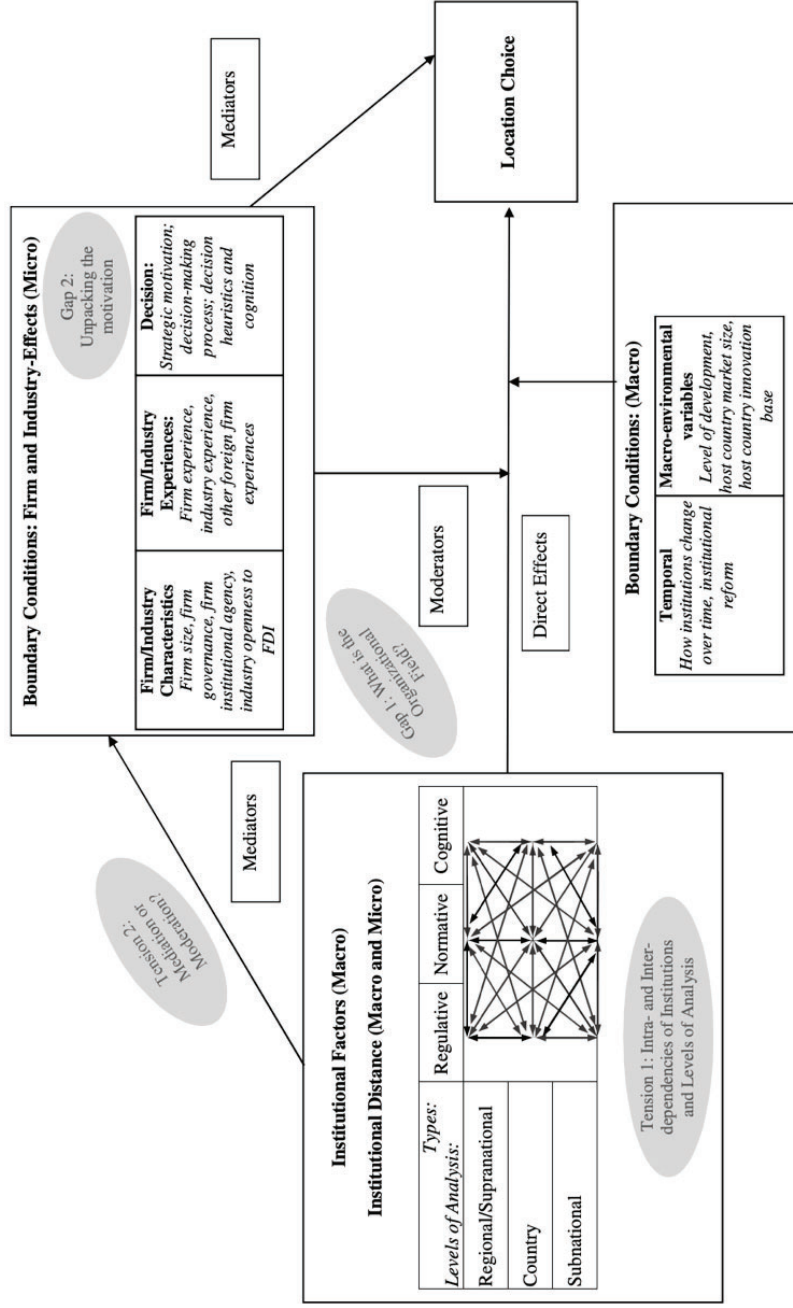
Figure 4

An 'Organising Framework' to Explain Location Choice in Internationalisation

Source: Donnelly and Manolova (2020)

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The informal institutional differences (Garcia-Muina et al., 2020; North, 1991; Romero-Martinez et al., 2019) between home and host country is a factor in the location decision. In addition, business networks are found to be nested in institutional environments. Torkkeli et al. (2019) postulate that network proficiency, in particular, assists in the successful internationalisation of SMEs. These institutional environments are relevant in both the home and host country.

The study of the influence of host and home country networks in developing countries is, however, nascent. Despite this, Nyuur et al. (2018) explain the positive role of networks in enabling small businesses to identify opportunities in potential foreign markets. Furthermore, these scholars note how networks advance the acquisition of resources early on in the internationalisation process.

Having alluded to the influence of networks in opportunity identification, it is worthwhile to develop an understanding of the influence of networks on the growth and realisation of opportunities. Liu et al. (2021) posit that sub-Saharan manufacturing companies that have business relationships with foreign companies benefit disproportionately from different networks when they internationalise. Kim et al. (2020) argue that there is a positive relationship between 'ethno-national ties' and international opportunity exploitation.

Of most use to these companies is a business, external firm-to-firm network wherein the home country company is already supplying international buyers (Liu et al., 2021). The authors' findings are significant because the literature to date on networks has focused on the interpersonal relationships and networks of business founders (Jiang et al., 2020).

2.6.2   Entry Mode Decisions and the Cultural-cognitive Institution

A meta-analysis done by Schellenberg et al. (2019), which reviewed the market entry mode literature, described a dearth of literature both in the realm of decision making and the choices of small businesses (Elia et al., 2019). However, De Cock et al. (2021) assert that individual founders are instrumental in deciding the course of internationalisation, based on both their own historical engagement in internationalisation and their belief in the value of internationalising.

Jiang et al. (2018) opine on managerial cognition and managerial experience in international markets. They found that a global mindset, together with a decision-making

style and global experience, influences the type of entry mode decision. They illustrate that managers in multinational organisations who have a global mindset opt for a low-risk entry but that this is moderated by their decision-making style.

Global mindset is defined by Levy et al. (2007, p. 244) as 'a highly complex cognitive structure characterized by an openness and articulation of multiple cultural and strategic realities on both global and local levels, and the cognitive ability to mediate and integrate across this multiplicity'. The cultural-cognitive institutional influence on internationalisation in respect of entry is via organisational behaviour in respect of organisational learning (Albertoni et al., 2019). A global mindset at the managerial level is another cultural-cognitive aspect of importance in internationalisation (Levy et al., 2007). Finally, managerial experience may be influential in choosing the entry mode (Jiang et al., 2018).

2.6.3 Pattern of Internationalisation

The inter-relationship between market typology and decision making in the internationalisation process was investigated by Gammeltoft and Cuervo-Cazurro (2021). The scholars suggest that process theory in internationalisation is not sufficiently robust in the area of emerging market multinationals. In support of Schellenberg et al. (2018) contention, the authors assert that emerging market multinationals display different decision-making behaviours in their internationalisation process.

Most extant literature implicitly reflects the behaviour of developed market multinationals, which will traditionally expand to countries and markets that are similar to their own and which are in close proximity (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021). The authors challenge the Uppsala model of internationalisation by explaining that emerging market multinationals are more likely to choose markets that are far from the home country, much earlier on in the evolution of the firm and with a higher commitment to investment modes (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Vahlne & Johanson, 2019).

2.7 Religion and Internationalisation

One could argue that the influence of religion (as a cultural-cognitive and informal institution) on internationalisation is indeterminate (Richardson, 2014). Cultural distance is defined as a difference in cultural values between countries (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013). Religion (although a multi-level construct) may or may not serve to reduce cultural

distance through individual religious belief systems (Kwok et al., 2020; Younis et al., 2022).

The depth of a Muslim entrepreneur's faith is a determinant of the ability of their religious beliefs to inform their decision making (Younis et al., 2022). Additionally, the decision making in international negotiations appears to be influenced by both similar and different personal religious belief systems, which is termed 'spiritual comradery' (Richardson & Rammel, 2018). Spiritual comradery may enable effective joint decision making.

As noted previously, individuals who practise their belief systems may be obligated to abide by a religious duty to treat others equally (Chan et al., 2022; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Karakas and Sarigollu (2019) note that religion fosters feelings of connectedness with others. The scholars conclude that a religious belief system enhances the sense of collective responsibility within an organisation, helping the organisation to be mindful of the spiritual well-being of its constituents. Therefore, as mentioned before, kinship and culpability are influential when making decisions that affect the business.

Furthermore, the religious values of fairness and honesty inform a compassionate intention (House, et al. 2002; Tliass & McAdam, 2021). This organisational compassionate intention leads women entrepreneurs to engage with others with transparency. Alongside the influence of a compassionate intention in decision making, unconscious values at the individual level of analysis may influence decision making (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Henley, 2017).

The proposition that religious and secular paradigms should not be seen as mutually exclusive is confirmed by Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019), who enrich the discussion by suggesting that science and religion are complementary. The authors name this 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Neubert, 2019). The term 'co-inherence' describes how principles of faith present themselves in material research and business journeys. The term can be extended to mean the learnings that each paradigm can gain from the other.

The decisions about initial and international business venturing, it could be argued, are influenced by creation, which is a significant pillar of religious belief systems (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Tliass & McAdam, 2021). In addition, creation may be evident in international business decisions through choice to initiate an international new venture

(McDougall et al., 1994). Finally, the religious idea of transformation may be relevant to internationalisation decisions in 'born global' enterprises (Rennie, 1993).

In conclusion, despite contrasting scholarly work, it may be argued that psychic distance, which is a cultural-cognitive institution, is relevant to internationalisation decisions (Magnani et al., 2018). It could be posited that this is because the acquisition of information and knowledge in foreign markets is challenging (Safari & Chetty, 2019). Additionally, the perceptual nature of psychic distance is a relevant consideration due to the definition of religion as 'systems of meaning' (Schmidt et al., 1999, p. 10).

2.7.1   Religion and Location Decisions

Donnellly and Manolova (2020) assert the coexistence of institutional and economic influences on the location decision. Religion as a cultural-cognitive and informal institution (through cognition, shared values and beliefs), however, somewhat influences the location decision (Onuklu et al, 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2020). The power of the religious influence appears indeterminate (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). Garcia-Muina et al. (2020) conclude that religion is an important determinant of communication and engagement in the context of the location decision.

Furthermore, it can be argued that networks are important in the internationalisation process (Torkkeli et al., 2018). There appears to be a dearth of literature on the influence of networks in internationalisation in developing countries (Nyuur et al., 2018). However, there is some support for the influence of religious networks in the internationalisation process (Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019).

2.7.2   Religion and Entry Mode Decisions

There is somewhat of a religious influence on both the mode of entry decision in internationalisation and the level of commitment on entry, for example, in accordance with the Islamic obligation to engage in low-risk business activities (Kavas et al., 2020; Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018; Younis et al., 2022). However, there is inconsistency in the literature about the salience of religion in the mode of entry decisions (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). The path of internationalisation may be influenced by Muslim affiliation, but this is also inconclusive (Richardson, 2014).

Younis et al. (2022) posit the concept of 'regional Muslim internationalisation'. The authors have found that SMEs enter regional markets in a low-commitment mode (a tenet of Islam is low risk) and that regional internationalisation occurs early, which is in accordance with the Muslim values of hard work and proactiveness.

Furthermore, confirmation of the positive influence of Islam on export-driven companies is demonstrated through a reduction in entry costs (Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018). Lo Turco and Maggioni (2018) demonstrate that religious similarity fosters trust in customers in new international markets. However, this effect of religious similarity in building trust appears to diminish over time (Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018).

2.8   Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature that discusses the influence of religion on internationalisation decisions, in general, posits that religion as a multilevel construct may reduce cultural distance (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013; Beugelsdijk et al., 2018). Cultural distance is a societal cultural-cognitive institution of importance (Scott, 1987). Religious belief systems foster kinship and culpability at both the individual and organisational level and influence decision making (Jimenz et al., 2019; Karakas & Sarigollu 2019; Richardson & Rammal, 2018). This is supported by the conclusion that a compassionate intention on the part of the organisation influences decisions (House et al., 2002; Tliass & McAdam, 2021).

The presence of unconscious religious values may mean that religion is inextricably linked to decision making by individuals (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Henley, 2017; Neubert, 2019). Women entrepreneurs' decisions about starting a business and a new international venture may be governed by the creation pillar of religious belief systems (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Tliass & McAdam, 2021). Following on from this, the choice of location appears to be influenced by the coexistence of both economic and religious influences (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2020; Torkkeli et al., 2018).

The influence of religious networks in internationalisation decisions appears salient and has been found to influence the location decision (Nyuur et al., 2018). There is somewhat of a religious influence on entry decisions, namely the mode and level of commitment, which are low risk (Kavas et al., 2020; Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018; Younis et al., 2022).

The pattern of internationalisation may be influenced by religion but is inconclusive (Richardson, 2014; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). The most likely influences on the internationalisation pattern are similar religious communities (Younis et al., 2022).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 will synthesise the key insights discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The literature review outlined recent academic discussions regarding the cultural-cognitive institution (Moreira et al. 2019; North, 1991; Ojong et al., 2021; Scott, 1987). The scholarly body of work has led to academic arguments that seek to explain the influence of religion on the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises (Bajdo & Dickson, 2001; Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; House et al., 2002; Richardson & Rammel, 2018; Smith et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2021; Tliass & McAdam, 2021; Younis et al., 2022).

The scholars posit the coexistence of religious and economic influences on the location decision in internationalisation (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Donnellly & Manolova, 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2020). The influence of religious networks is a consideration in the location decision (Kurt et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Nyuur et al., 2018; Torkkeli et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature that religion somewhat influences mode, entry commitment as well as the pattern of internationalisation (Kavas et al., 2020; Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018; Richardson, 2014; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Younis et al., 2022).

3.2 Research Questions and Propositions

This section outlines the research questions and sub-questions formulated from the literature review. A summary of the arguments formulated from the literature review will be provided and an attendant proposition developed.

3.2.1 Research Question 1

How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

The proposition that religious and secular paradigms should not be seen as mutually exclusive is confirmed by Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019), who enrich the discussion by suggesting that science and religion are complementary (Neubert, 2019). The

scholars name this 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019). The term describes how principles of faith present themselves in material research and business journeys.

Decision making in international negotiations appears to be influenced by both similar and different personal religious belief systems, which is termed 'spiritual comradery' (Richardson & Rammel, 2018). However, Jimenez et al. (2019) posit that diverse religious belief systems may constrain the success of infrastructure projects.

In addition, individuals who practise their belief systems may be obligated to abide by a religious duty to treat others fairly (Chan et al., 2022; Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Karakas and Sarigollu (2019) note that religion fosters feelings of connectedness with others. The scholars conclude that a religious belief system enhances the sense of collective responsibility within an organisation, helping the organisation to be mindful of the spiritual well-being of its constituents.

A further argument harnessed from the literature is that the religious values of fairness and honesty inform a compassionate intention (House et al., 2002; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). Additionally, this organisational compassionate intention leads women entrepreneurs to engage with others with transparency. Alongside the influence of a compassionate intention, at the individual level of analysis, unconscious values may **also** influence decision making (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Henley, 2017).

Therefore, it can be argued that science and the metaphysical should be integrated in order to gain a clearer understanding of management phenomena, which are the topic of this study. The paradigms of science and religion need not be mutually exclusive (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Gumusay, 2019; Neubert, 2019).

Research Proposition 1: The influence of religious beliefs, values and practices is integrated into decision making.

3.2.2   Research Question 2

How does religion influence the location decision in the internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Donnellly and Manolova (2020) assert the coexistence of institutional and economic influences on the location decision. The location decision is also influenced by religion as a cultural-cognitive and informal institution (through cognition, shared values and

beliefs) (De Beule et al., 2018; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Romero-Martinez et al., 2020). The power of the religious influence appears indeterminate (Cuervo-Cazurro et al., 2019; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019).

Furthermore, it can be argued that networks are important in the internationalisation process (Liu, et al., 2021; Nyuur et al., 2018; Torkkeli et al., 2018). There is an opportunity to further understand the influence of networks in internationalisation, in developing countries (Nyuur et al., 2018). However, there is some support for the influence of religious networks in the internationalisation process (Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019).

Research Proposition 2: The location decision is influenced by the coexistence of religious and economic influences.

3.2.3   Research Question 3

How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

It can be argued that there is religious influence on both the mode of entry decision in internationalisation and the level of commitment on entry, for example, in accordance with the Islamic tenet of low risk (Kavas et al., 2020; Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018; Younis et al., 2022). However, there is inconsistency in the literature about the extent of this influence (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). The path of internationalisation does appear to be somewhat influenced by Muslim affiliation (Richardson, 2014).

Furthermore, scholars have recently started to question the Uppsala model of internationalisation, which posits an incremental internationalisation path (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018). The scholars posit that this model of incremental internationalisation is unable to explain new paths of internationalisation, different typologies of markets and different entities (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018). It can, therefore, be concluded that the Uppsala model of incremental internationalisation does not comprehensively explain strategic internationalisation decisions (Surdu et al., 2021).

Research Proposition 3: Religion influences the entry mode, entry commitment and path of internationalisation.

3.3 Conclusion

Table 4

Summary of Research Propositions

Research Proposition 1	The influence of religious beliefs, values and practices is integrated into decision making.
Research Proposition 2	The location decision is influenced by the coexistence of religious and economic influences.
Research Proposition 3	Religion influences the entry mode, entry commitment and path of internationalisation.

Source: Author's own

This chapter posits the three research questions and propositions developed from the literature review in Chapter 2. The three research questions: are a) 'How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?', b) 'How does religion influence the location decision in the internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?' and c) 'How does religion influence the "how" decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?' Additionally, as is explained in Table 4, three research propositions have been synthesised from the literature.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters posited that despite a small body of work on the influence of religion on decision making, as it pertains to the internationalisation of women-owned businesses, there is considerable scope to further understand the influence of religion in a South African context. This assertion has led to the main research question, which is: 'What is the influence of religion as a cognitive-cultural institution on the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?' The central research objective is to understand the influence of religion on the main internationalisation questions. These are: a) the 'where' of internationalisation, more commonly known as the location decision and b) the 'how' of internationalisation, which refers to the mode of entry, level of commitment and pattern of internationalisation into a foreign jurisdiction.

The researcher used an inductive approach to theory development and a constructionist philosophy in this interpretivist, narrative study of 13 women entrepreneurs (Bansal et al., 2018; Riessman,1993). Chapter 4 outlines the research plan and the steps taken to collect and analyse the data, which informed the research questions. The chapter also outlines, as specifically and comprehensively as possible, the research methodology (and all that it encompassed), which was used to arrive at the key themes. The key themes were determined based on the raw data of the interviews and secondary texts.

4.2 Research Design

Doz (2011) proposes that to improve qualitative research in international business, a solid grounding in method is required. This idea is enriched by Cuervo-Cazurra et al. (2020), who explain the lower proportion of qualitative research in international business scholarship.

With these assertions in mind, the chosen research design was an exploratory study that is interpretive and constructionist in nature. The method was cross-sectional (conducted at a particular point in time and not over many months or years) and included an interview process.

4.2.1   Research Philosophy

In the post-modernist paradigm (Bell et al., 2018, p. 356), people's experiences, thoughts and opinions have come to be valued as important in research. This assumption was made with regard to this study, as the study was of women in their social environment, considering their opinions and journeys. The following research philosophy was employed: the researcher engaged with the study participants, and, in this way, the study contributed to new knowledge and theory. This philosophy is called interpretivism (Bell et al., 2018, p. 356). It was the **correct** philosophy for the study, since the research questions could not be answered by secondary data, and the study was not investigating causal or comparative relationships.

Goldkuhl (2012) has written about the main thesis of interpretivism. His commentary is appropriate for this study, since the aim of this study was to recognise the subjective meanings that women business owners attribute to their experience of institutions. This study attempted to attribute significance to their descriptions and to depict these as accurately as possible, to assist in constructing new knowledge in the field. In their work, Micelotta et al. (2018) employed an interpretivist philosophy as they delved into the subtleties of why women faced challenges in their new ventures, in an industry with male-orientated norms.

As mentioned, the epistemological framework employed in this research was interpretivism. Interpretivism indicates that differences in the experiences of the study participants are to be respected and incorporated (Goldkuhl, 2012). The women entrepreneurs who formed part of this research were studied in their own environment. The data was subjective in nature. This was important because no two entrepreneurs follow the same path. This means that the information collected in this research was rich (because of the natural differences among people).

Bias was a key axiological consideration and with respect to methodology, many biases were considered during the research process. These biases are outlined below. Galdas (2017), however, questions the focus on bias – the scholar asserts that bias is more applicable to quantitative methods and posits that bias in qualitative research is an inevitability and that rigor and trustworthiness are more important parameters to consider.

However, social desirability bias may have affected the narrative of women entrepreneurs with regard to their cognition, behaviour and experience (Chung & Monroe, 2003; Nederhof, 1985). Nederhof (1985) has proposed methods to minimise social desirability bias, one of these being to choose interviewers strategically. This method was not available to the researcher, but she was mindful that establishing rapport with respondents may have increased this type of bias. According to Nederhof (1985), if the interviewer is perceived as engaging, the likelihood of social desirability bias increases. Therefore, the researcher attempted, at all times, to remain neutral in demeanour.

Another bias that came to the fore during the data-collection process was interviewer bias, in respect of the researcher's own expectations. Support for this assertion was generated by self-awareness, that is, by understanding that issues related to women and their advancement is a particular passion of the researcher and that there was a possibility of this influencing the interview and research process. One area where there was a risk of this type of bias was in the analysis of the data. The researcher was cognisant of the probability for bias during the analysis.

4.2.2   Purpose of the Design

Hirschman (1986) described the origins of a human type of investigation that is post-modern and which differs from the philosophy of the physical sciences. The researcher sought to understand the religious actions and motivations of women who own enterprises, as well as their internationalisation journey. Their cognitive and cultural dimension was also relevant to the study and was an excellent fit for a narrative approach (Bell et al., 2018; Ganzin et al., 2020). This type of research was both descriptive and exploratory, as the research questions were 'how' and 'why' questions. In addition, a narrative approach was applicable, since the researcher was investigating the process of internationalisation, which, by its nature, encompasses change. Additionally, the study sought to make sense of the influence of religion on internationalisation. The context of the research was also explicitly stated and is 'the women-owned enterprise'. The delineation of the context of the study was an important boundary condition – it assisted in producing qualitative research that can be considered trustworthy (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2020).

There is a scarcity of research on women-owned enterprises in South Africa, particularly in terms of the influence of religion on business ventures. The current research

comprises work on female entrepreneurship in Africa and the role of religion as capital, but the lens of the cultural-cognitive institution is not evident in the research (Ojong et al., 2021).

The research design was appropriate for the research question (Bono & McNamara, 2011). Bono and McNamara (2011) suggest that choosing the right design is not a well-defined or 'clear-cut' process and that the process is tacit in nature. Further, the design needed to ensure that the results of the study were reliable, valid and that they could be replicated (Bell et al., 2018, p. 356). For these reasons, it was important to clearly outline the procedure for the research work, should others wish to follow the same design, particularly as it is more challenging to achieve replicability in qualitative research.

4.2.3   Approach to Theory Development

The literature review discussed the different perspectives pertaining to institutions, religion and the internationalisation process. The unit of analysis in this study was the strategic internationalisation decisions of women who owned and internationalised their enterprises. In the context of women-owned enterprises, in particular, the cognitive and cultural dimensions of institutions and the non-linear behaviour patterns of emerging market companies means that there is still much data to gather and theory to build. The theory consulted in the study was, therefore, described as 'nascent' (Edmondson, 2007).

Packard (2017) has commented on the dearth of interpretivism in entrepreneurship theory, as this leads to an inability to understand entrepreneurship through the lens of intentional action by an individual. The author has also challenged the functionalist paradigm in entrepreneurship study with respect to process. The scholar posits that interpretivism has allowed an acceptance of the irregular path of entrepreneurship and that it is, therefore, important in supporting the study of the internationalisation process.

An inductive approach to theory development (Bansal et al., 2018) was adopted in this study, since the research on religion in internationalisation decision making is nascent. The inductive approach assisted in the research aim of contributing new knowledge to this topic and involved the use of raw data to build codes, categories and themes, which are increasingly abstract.

4.2.4   Research Strategy

As mentioned, the voices of women entrepreneurs were vital to this study. An important consideration in the research strategy was to be aware that, according to Bell et al. (2018, p. 383), qualitative research is more suited to research that uses women as the sample population. It was the authors' contention that feminists prefer the use of qualitative research.

A narrative research strategy was employed, since this was the most relevant strategy for answering the research questions. This choice of narrative strategy is supported by the following justifications: a) internationalisation decisions are part of a process; b) the study sought a deep understanding of the experiences of women in internationalisation; c) the respondents were able to narrate and to make sense of the influence of religion on their strategic internationalisation decisions; d) their narratives were linked to societal narratives, since religion is a multi-level construct; e) the nature of the research was implicit, and the narratives were somewhat fragmented; and f) the narratives were retold through the research findings, outcomes and conclusions (Bell et al., 2018; Riessman, 1993). The narratives were analysed through semi-structured interviews and were predominantly the realm of language and, therefore, narrative, qualitative research.

The research questions were evidence that theoretical development was required in the areas of religion and internationalisation. In order to contribute to theory building, a narrative approach was employed (as explained and justified in the preceding paragraph) (Bell et al., 2018, p. 592; Fotaki et al., 2020; Riesmann, 1993). The contribution to this nascent field was the experiences of individual women entrepreneurs as they engaged or did not engage their faiths in their decisions regarding the internationalisation of their businesses.

To date, there have been few studies (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019), employing a qualitative research methodology, that consider the influence of religion on strategic internationalisation decisions. These studies have typically been based in South East Asia, with a focus on only one particular religious belief system, and few of these studies have focused on the experiences of women-owned enterprises (Block et al., 2020).

4.2.5 Time Horizon

The design was cross-sectional in nature (Bryman, 2006) in that a number of respondents were studied at a particular point in time. The interviews commenced on the 24th of August 2022 and concluded on the 14th of October 2022.

4.3 Research Methods

4.3.1 Population

The study population was women who owned enterprises and who were based in sub-Saharan Africa. The women had also internationalised their businesses outside of sub-Saharan Africa.

4.3.2 Sampling

Bono and McNamara (2011) suggest that the research question should lead to the selection of the sample. Because the study employed qualitative, narrative research, theoretical sampling was appropriate, particularly as the aim of the study was to contribute to theory development. 'Purposive sampling' refers to sampling that is not random (Bell et al., 2018, p. 389). Purposive sampling was employed in this study, as this type of sampling is strategic, and, in the case of this research, targeted those who were closely related to the research question.

The research question provided a clear indication of who was relevant to the study. As the study progressed, the sample did not evolve in any material way, and a fixed sampling strategy was, therefore, used (Bell et al., 2018, p. 391). It was suggested that the researcher sample a wide variety (in terms of characteristics, location and business sectors) of entrepreneurs and businesses. This is termed 'maximum variation' sampling (Bell et al., 2018, p. 390). This was coupled with 'criterion' sampling.

In respect of criterion sampling, the following criteria were applied to the population: a) the women had to own their own businesses, b) they had to have internationalised their enterprises, c) they had to have been based in sub-Saharan Africa and d) they had to self-identify as Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Jewish. The correspondence that was sent to the researcher's network evolved to include an unintended amendment to the criteria, namely that the participants had to: e) identify as religious.

Due to the nature of the sample criteria, the selection of the sample was challenging, and 'snowball' sampling was utilised. The initial intention was that the sample be drawn from a sub-Saharan population of women, but the sample was ultimately located in South Africa, due to constraints within the researcher's networks. It was decided that the influence of predominant religious identities in South Africa would be investigated. These were, among others, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism (Pew Research Centre, 2015).

According to Bell et al. (2018, p. 399), there has been much debate about what constitutes the correct sample size and so university standards, which in qualitative research was approximately 12 – 16 participants, were used as a guideline. In addition, the authors suggested that the richness and quality of the collected information is more important than the sample size (Bell et al., 2018, p. 399).

At the conclusion of the study, 13 participants were interviewed, due to the nature of the sample criteria and the extent of the researcher's network. The richness of data is supported by the duration of the interviews and the length of the transcripts, as shown in Table 5 below.

The researcher only commenced with recording when commencing with the questions from the interview guide. The preamble was not included.

Table 5

Duration of Interview and Length of Transcript by Respondent, Religious Identification and Purpose of Business

Respondent Number	Religious Identification	Purpose of Business	Year of Internationalisation	Length of Interview	Length of Transcript
R1	Christian with affiliation to ancestral beliefs	Strategic brand consulting services	2001	38 minutes	11 pages
R2	Muslim	Luxury residential property development	2021	46 minutes	13 pages
R3	Christian	Life and business mastery; Mediation; Family law	2009	1 hour	13 pages
R4	Christian with affiliation to Hinduism	Broad-based women investment company; Private equity; Non-profit organisation; Corporate governance consultant	2002	52 minutes	12 pages
R5	Greek Orthodox with affiliations to Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Roman Catholic faiths	Clinical nutrition psychology; Oncology friendly perfumes and skincare products; Therapeutic tea	2012	49 minutes	15 pages
R6	Judaism	Human resource consulting	2007	48 minutes	11 pages
R7	Muslim, converted from Christianity	Development finance consulting	1994	1 hour, 5 minutes	18 pages
R8	Judaism	Commercial property development; Listed properties; Listed equities; Private equity	2015	43 minutes	11 pages
R9	Christian	Development of creative intelligence in organisations	2020	1 hour, 3 minutes	17 pages
R10	Christian	Wealth management;	2017	1 hour, 10 minutes	18 pages

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		Educational podcast company specialising in teaching finance; Author		
R11	Muslim, converted from Christianity	Jewellery design and e-commerce sales	2018	41 minutes	12 pages
R12	Christian with Judaism influence	Non-profit organisation; Gender mainstreaming	2012	54 minutes	15 pages
R13	Hindu with Christian influence	Engineering; Infrastructure development	2011	1 hour, 13 minutes	19 pages

Source: Author's own

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4.3.3 Unit of Analysis

According to Bell et al. (2018, p. 366), one of the differences between natural science and social science research is the unit of analysis. In social science research, the unit is humanistic, explanatory and able to make sense of the world. The unit of analysis in this study is strategic internationalisation decisions.

4.3.4 Measurement Instrument

Data collection in this study took the form of semi-structured interviews, implemented through the use of a semi-structured interview schedule. In the semi-structured interviews, the questions were organised and specific, but the respondents were given the opportunity to be flexible in the manner in which they replied (Bell et al., 2018, p. 436). As further validation for the choice of semi-structured interviews, it must be noted that the study research questions were well delineated. The research questions acted as a solid base from which to develop the interview schedule.

Key studies on the topic of religion and strategic decision making in internationalisation were utilised to generate the initial literature themes, and these themes assisted in the compilation of the interview guide (Busentiz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Kavas et al., 2020; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019; Younis et al., 2022). To ensure consistency, attention was placed, at all times, on returning to the research questions. The table in Appendix A outlines the interview themes, key literature supporting the interview questions and the interview guide questions, which were developed by the researcher.

The interview schedule was piloted. The schedule was **not** modified after two initial pilot interviews. Due to time considerations, the input of an expert (prior to ethics submission) helped to mitigate this necessity. The development of the interview guide was, therefore, informed by the input of an expert. In addition, the development of the guide was informed by the guidance of the research supervisor, who had experience in compiling a research instrument in the study of religion and decisions. The interview guide can be found in Appendix B.

Scholars suggest that the research instrument be developed in order to answer all research questions (Kallio et al., 2016). The layout of the guide was carefully considered, and the researcher was sensitive to the flow of the questions. The interview guide included introductory questions, which were developed to build rapport with respondents.

The different types of questions that can be employed in an interview guide (Bell et al., 2018, 485), including 'introducing', 'direct', 'indirect' and 'probing' questions, were incorporated into the instrument. In addition, the language in the guide was easily understood by the interviewees. The basis for using a semi-structured interview guide was to collect 'rich' and 'thick' data. Therefore, flexibility was also built into the guide.

4.3.5 Data Collection

Prior to the data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the GIBS Ethics Research Committee. This permission from the GIBS Ethics Research Committee was obtained on the 15th of August 2022.

Crane et al. (2018) indicate that the most common data-collection methods in qualitative research are 'in-depth interviews, focus groups, archival data and participant observation'. While interviews should preferably be conducted in person, there is evidence that digital interviews are not only more convenient but also that the interviewer–interviewee bond in a digital interview is similar to that of in-person interview (Bell et al., 2018, p. 497). For the purposes of this study, Zoom recordings and one digital audio programme were used during the data-collection process.

Much work was done to prepare for the collection of data via the interviews. A thorough, detail-oriented preparation for the interview was paramount. The interview technique was critical to the study, and the researcher utilised guides and tutorials to assist in developing her interview skills (Bell et al., 2018, p. 484). According to Bell et al. (2018, p. 441), the criteria for being a successful interviewer are sensitivity, gentleness and ethical sensitivity. It was imperative to use a high-quality, reliable digital audio recorder to record all the interviews. The interviewer was attentive to the body language and other non-verbal cues of the interviewees, so as to act ethically at all times (by not placing excessive pressure on the interviewees). Listening skills were also crucial during the interviews.

Since the respondents were approached through personal networks, a short introduction about the research topic, question and sample criteria was prepared. This was shared with the researcher's network. In this way, the various network participants were able to refer respondents who were willing to participate and who met the sampling criteria. A short telephonic discussion was held with most of the referred participants to answer any pre-interview questions and to arrange the date and time of the interview. A pre-interview

email was then sent to each respondent with the Informed Consent Form, which was signed prior to the interview and returned to the researcher. The correspondence sent to each respondent is attached as Appendix C. There were one or two occasions where the respondent was not able to compete the consent form, and, in these circumstances, verbal permission for the interview was obtained and recorded prior to commencement of the interview. In all circumstances, written consent was received prior to transcription of the video and audio interviews. The interview guide was not shared with any of the respondents ahead of the time.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in the business environment of the respondents or the business space at the respondents' homes. These environments were quiet, and although there was one exception, the interviews were conducted in a manner that enabled the respondents to respond without distraction. One interview was conducted in person.

Prior to the commencement of each interview, the researcher confirmed that the respondents were still willing to participate, and the respondents were informed that they were able to withdraw from the interview at any juncture. Additionally, the confidentiality of the participants and their data was emphasised, and the GIBS procedure for ensuring this confidentiality was shared with the respondents. Because the Zoom interviews were professionally transcribed, the respondents were made aware of a) the Confidentiality and Non-disclosure Agreement signed by the researcher's professional transcriber and b) the fact that this transcriber was approved by GIBS.

The interview commenced with introductory questions about the respondents' personal and professional backgrounds, their current roles and the main purpose of their enterprises. The interview schedule did not explicitly ask about the academic qualifications of the respondents, but as the research progressed, it became clear that this data would be useful. This data was sourced from secondary sources and is discussed later in this chapter. The questions in the interview guide pertaining to the religious identity of the participants signalled a change in the guide regarding questions about faith.

The interview then progressed to a discussion about religious influence in the personal and business lives of the respondents. Eleven questions were discussed in this regard. The aim behind the first five questions was to understand the religious influence on the respondents' personal and professional lives. The aim behind the remaining six

questions was to understand the religious influence on internationalisation decisions, specifically.

Due to the complexity of the topic, the researcher probed the respondents on some of the information that they shared to obtain clarity and a clearer understanding of what they meant. Notably, the respondents appeared at ease in the discussion about their faith, and they shared rich data.

Each interview lasted between 38 minutes and one hour and 13 minutes, as detailed in Table 5. The interviews were deemed to be of a suitable quality and assisted in the process of answering the research questions. Once each interview was completed, a 'thank you' email was sent to each participant. Data quality was assured through adherence to validity principles, as laid out by Whittemore et al. (2001). As mentioned, the recorded interviews were then transcribed, in their entirety, by a professional transcriber (Davidson, 2009). Upon receipt of the transcriptions, the researcher checked each transcript for errors while listening to the recorded interviews. Very few errors were noted in the transcriptions.

Natow (2020) discusses the contribution of triangulation in 'elite interviews'. The concept of 'triangulation' was discussed in the design and was also relevant to data collection. In Natow's (2020) analysis, the author was able to show that the most common method of triangulation when conducting interviews is document analysis and that the overriding reason for choosing to triangulate is to bolster validity. In an information-rich world, it made sense to use multiple sources of data to enrich analysis and quality; this is in recognition of the difficulty of the problems studied by qualitative researchers (Bluhm et al., 2011). It was anticipated that the main role of triangulation sources in this study was to source data about the qualifications of the respondents and to find evidence of the presence of religious beliefs and values on the company business platforms (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2020).

All of the aforementioned triangulation data were already available in the public domain. The triangulation data sources were the LinkedIn profiles of the participants, websites that contained business articles about the enterprises, business interviews with the respondents, the enterprises' websites and certain social media company platforms.

4.3.6 Data Analysis

Once the interviews had been appropriately conducted, the video and audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed. The services of a professional transcriber, approved by the university, were engaged in order to embrace the full essence of the interviews (Bell et al., 2018, p. 492). The transcriber completed a Confidentiality and Non-disclosure Agreement, as stipulated by the GIBS Ethics Research Committee.

It was important to review the transcripts as soon as possible after the interviews and transcription to avoid missing important subtleties. As mentioned, the transcripts were checked for errors while the recordings were listened to. The transcripts were also read more than once to develop an understanding of the participants' narratives. Once this was done, the transcripts were loaded onto computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), in this case, ATLAS.ti software. The use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software has widely optimised the analysis of semi-structured interviews (Bell et al., 2018, p. 582; O'Kane et al., 2021). The secondary data from the platforms mentioned earlier was uploaded onto ATLAS.ti, and the relevant data was coded. These were the first steps in organising the data.

Riessman (1993) assisted in choice of narrative analysis as cogent, since the narratives of each participant would be analysed to develop more abstract and aggregated themes. This was achieved by looking for patterns in the narratives. The words and language in the transcripts were the focus of this process.

One of the most critical aspects of data analysis, and the start of the analysis process, was the coding of the data. During the coding process, large volumes of transcript data were handled, which enabled the researcher to begin creating meaning. This was an iterative process, and, although there was no immutable approach, different levels of coding took place upon consecutive review of the transcripts.

Codes are essentially shorthand meanings attributed to the main meaning of the text. The codes were grouped together, dependent on the iteration, and then grouped into categories (Bell et al., 2019, p. 576). Two hundred and fifty-six initial codes were generated. The coding process is termed 'first-order analysis' and was more focused on the respondent. These initial codes were then grouped into 91 second-order codes. This process is called 'second-order analysis'. These second-order codes were then further

grouped into 19 categories. Categories were derived from the grouping of second-level codes to develop aggregate meaning and increasing levels of abstraction.

In the final process of the analysis, nine themes were derived from the data. The cognitive process employed during the generation of themes from the categories was to seek to answer the research questions from Chapter 3. Furthermore, in order to find new insights, the researcher sought to identify associations between the categories relating to religion (in respect of religious belief systems, religious values and religious practice) and the categories relating to the internationalisation decisions.

Upon reflection, one of the dilemmas faced by the researcher was the concept of 'inductive analysis' (Bell et al., 2018, p. 562). During the data analysis, new and unexpected themes arose. The benefit of this was that it assisted the researcher in building the theory. It could be argued that this was the essence of the qualitative research. However, new and unexpected themes from the data required a circular return to the literature to review additional work to support the analysis. Two unexpected themes arose during the process of theme development, namely: a) the theme of 'the influence of networks' and b) the theme of 'unsystematic patterns of internationalisation'. As mentioned, synthesis of the narrative analysis work was the researcher's small contribution to the theory development.

Data storage took the form of electronic storage on the researcher's computer. The data was stored in a Dropbox account, which is password-protected. It was also placed onto a storage device (which is located in a secure place), where it will be kept for 10 years. A printed copy of the final dissertation was filed and will also be kept for 10 years. The following elements were stored: the audio recordings, the transcripts and the dissertation. All have been stored with no participant identifiers.

4.3.7 Quality Assurance

Some authors have criticised the relevance of reliability and validity in qualitative research, since these dimensions imply one truth, which falls within the philosophy of positivism (Bell et al., 2019, p. 364; Johnson, 1997). The authors suggest the use of credibility as a more appropriate alternative requirement. During this study, credibility was underpinned by: a) following good practice while conducting the research, b) triangulation and c) respondent validation. The researcher attempted, at every point in the research, to adhere to good research practice, as is outlined in this chapter.

Triangulation was important to validate the data, and, to do this, secondary data was utilised, as mentioned. The timelines inherent in this particular submission did not allow for respondent validation but was a measure that could have been implemented by exception.

However, the validity of the research was also meta-analysed by the researcher according to the suggestions of Johnson (1997). One validity concern, which has already been noted in this paper, was interviewer bias. This was mitigated by critical self-contemplation. In respect of selective recording of data, this was not possible, since the narratives of the respondents were recorded and transcribed verbatim, as outlined in the section on data collection.

The following steps were taken during the research to bolster validity in qualitative research, as posited by Johnson (1997): a) using verbatim quotations in the findings in Chapter 5, b) triangulating through secondary data sources, c) using the available theory, d) exercising self-awareness, as already mentioned and e) incorporating a degree of peer review with the help of the academic supervisor.

The strategy to assist descriptive validity (in other words, the use of multiple interviewers) was not permitted in this study, but as mentioned earlier, the recordings and transcription sufficed. Interpretative validity, whereby the accuracy with which the inner worlds of the participants was portrayed, has been addressed through the verbatim quotations of the respondents (see Chapter 5).

Validity, when using an interview schedule, was key in that largely ecological validity was not met; this was because the participants were in a false setting (Bell et al., 2018, p 58). The interviews were conducted using Zoom technology and were not in person. However, because the interviews were on video, some aspects of ecological validity were met. The respondents were in a variety of settings at the time of the interviews.

Further guidance in respect of reliability and validity in qualitative research was found in the work of scholars who suggested various confirmation strategies. Some of these strategies were adopted in the current study (Morse et al., 2002). These were: a) ensuring coherence between the research question and the different elements of the method, b) ensuring that the sample was compiled of those respondents who could narrate knowledgeably, to safeguard the quality of the research and c) ensuring that the collection and analysis of data took place concurrently.

4.4   Ethical Considerations

As noted previously, the research methodology was submitted to the GIBS Ethical Clearance Committee for approval after permission was received from the research supervisor. The permission to commence with the research was received on the 15th of August 2022.

The use of a semi-structured interview schedule or guide was helpful to avoid ethical pitfalls during the research (Bell et al., 2018, p. 110). Because the researcher is inexperienced, the approach that she took to ethics was universalism. Bell et al. (2018, p. 135) note the need for transparency with, and disclosure to, participants; they also note the need for informed consent to participate.

Participation in the study was not intended to harm participants, either physically or emotionally. A confidentiality agreement was signed to ensure that no information provided by the respondents could be linked in the public domain (both social and academic), to either themselves or their companies. The confidentiality that was afforded to the respondents was practised throughout the data-collection process as well as during the analysis and findings (in other words, no names and locations were documented during this process).

4.5   Study Limitations

The study limitations are outlined below. Strategies were put into place to mitigate the limitations. The first limitation was the cultural-cognitive framework of the researcher, who cares deeply about the upliftment of women. This did not, in retrospect, become cause for concern, since the interview discussions were primarily about religious influence. In the final analysis, the self-awareness of the researcher, in this study context, was an adequate strategy. The second limitation was the size of the sample, which was small. However, given that generalisability was not the purpose of the research, the study aimed to be as rich and as detailed as possible, to provide thorough and comprehensive insights. There were no material limitations, other than those already mentioned in relation to validity and reliability.

4.6   Summary of the Research Design

Table 6 provides a summary of the discussion in Chapter 4. It concludes the chapter with the main aspects of the research method, selected and justified to ably answer the research questions in Chapter 3.

Table 6

Summary of the Discussion in Chapter 4

Research Dimension	Current Study Design Dimensions
Philosophy	Constructivism; Interpretivism
Approach	Inductive
Strategy	Narrative strategy
Method	Qualitative exploratory study
Time horizon	Cross-sectional
Data collection	Semi-structured, in-depth interviews using Zoom platform; Total of 13 participants with knowledge close to the topic; Secondary data sources, which were business documents in the public domain
Data analysis	Qualitative, narrative analysis; First- and second-order codes, categories and themes
Data storage	Hard and soft copy storage for 10 years
Quality assurance, credibility, validity and reliability	Researcher self-awareness; Method aligned to question; Knowledgeable respondents; Recordings of interview transcribed directly; Triangulation; Data collection and analysis concurrently; Verbatim quotations in Chapter 5; Degree of peer review with academic supervisor

Source: Author's own

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to contribute to the literature about the influence of religion on the internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises. The literature review in Chapter 2 enabled the formulation of research propositions from the recent literature. These propositions have been summarised in Table 4 in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the analysis of the data collected from the 13 study participants.

Due to the inductive nature of the analysis, nine different themes were developed from the data analysis. These themes answer the main and sub research questions. The research propositions, identified in the literature review, informed the research questions. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources, with both collection methods having been approved by the GIBS Ethics Committee. The data that were collected from secondary sources were used to complete certain parameters, such as the respondents' qualifications and the visible manifestations of faith on their electronic business platforms. The latter motivation was prompted by the nature of the subject matter, which is metaphysical and internalised.

This chapter commences with Table 7. The table provides information about the respondents' religious identifications, their academic qualifications, the purpose of their enterprises, their status within their companies and the estimated size of their enterprises.

Table 7

Respondent Data

Respondent	Religious Identification	Qualifications	Purpose of Business	Current Role	Estimated Size of Business*
R1	Christian with affiliation to the ancestors	Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Biology; Master of Arts in Transpersonal Psychology (in progress)	Strategic brand consulting services	Founder; CEO; Owner; Director	Very small
R2	Ismaili Muslim	Master in Business Administration, specialising in Finance	Luxury residential property development	Founder; Owner	Very small
R3	Christian	Master in Family Law; Family advocate	Life and business mastery; Mediation; Family law	Founder; Owner Director	Micro
R4	Christian with affiliation to Hinduism	Chartered accountant	Broad-based women investment company; Private equity; Non-profit organisation; Corporate governance Consultant	Founder; CEO; Owner	Small
R5	Greek Orthodox with affiliations to Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Roman Catholic faiths	Doctor of Psychology, with specialisation in Nutritional Psychology	Clinical nutrition; Psychology; Oncology friendly perfumes and skincare products; Therapeutic tea	CEO; Nutritional psychologist; Owner	Micro
R6	Judaism	Doctoral candidate	Human resource consulting	Founder; Owner	Micro
R7	Muslim, converted from Christianity	Master of Development Anthropology	Development finance consultant	Director; Owner;	Micro
R8	Judaism	Bachelor of Commerce; Bachelor of Laws	Commercial property development; Listed properties;	CEO	Large

ID	Religion	Qualifications	Business	Role	Size
			Listed equities; Private equity		
R9	Christian	Bachelor of Business Science (Hons) in Finance and Accounting	Development of creative intelligence in organisations	Founder; Owner	Micro
R10	Christian	Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy; Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) in Financial Planning (*cum laude*)	Wealth management; Educational podcast company specialising in teaching finance; Author	Founder; Owner	Micro
R11	Muslim, converted from Christianity	Bachelor of Arts; Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration and Management	Jewellery design and e-commerce sales	Director; Owner	Micro
R12	Christian with Judaism influence	Financial services qualifications	Non-profit organisation; Gender mainstreaming	Founder; CEO	Micro
R13	Hindu with Christian influence	Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering; Graduate Diploma in Engineering (Environmental); Certificate in Arbitration	Engineering; Infrastructure development Sustainability	Founder; CEO	Medium

Source: Author's own

The size of the business is estimated based on secondary data and the number of employees.

Classification of size of business based on number of employees (Banking Association of South Africa)

5.2 Sample Descriptions

The 13 respondents in the sample group identified with various faith paradigms. The faith that each identifies with is documented in Table 7, as is the additional influences on their faith. Four respondents identified as having mixed-faith influences, their dominant identification being with Christianity. The influences of additional faith paradigms are documented in concert predominantly with the Christian faith. The additional faith influencers include ancestral beliefs, Hinduism, Judaism, Jehovah's Witness and Buddhism. Three respondents identified as Muslim, with two of the three having converted from Christianity. Three respondents identified as Christian, and two respondents as Jewish. One of the respondents was Hindu.

The qualifications of the respondents have been strategically included to illustrate the level of academic achievement of the women in the sample. One of the respondents did not have a tertiary qualification. All the other respondents had a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and most respondents had additional tertiary qualifications. One respondent was a doctoral candidate, and another had achieved a doctoral qualification. This data is highlighted to indicate that a significant number of the cohort are qualified in the scientific fields of commerce, accountancy, human sciences and engineering, among others. This baseline evidence is relevant because all the respondents identified as religious while also having an implied personal and academic investment in the sciences.

The respondents were from various industries, including civil engineering, strategic brand consulting, residential and commercial property development, jewellery design and sales, educational podcasting and wealth management consulting. All the women are either business founders or owners and work within their businesses. This implies that all have decision making capacity.

With reference to Chapter 4, it is worthwhile to restate that the research was exploratory and that the aim of the research instrument was to generate rich and detailed data. This requirement of obtaining rich data is necessary in light of the scarcity of research on the dissertation topic.

The structure of this chapter is thematic and is guided by the research propositions and questions from the literature review in Chapter 2. The questions from the interview guide are also included. The interview instrument (Appendix B) can be found in the 'Appendices' section of this document.

5.3   Research Question 1

How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

Interview schedule question: What is your religious belief system?

5.3.1   Theme 1: Religious Comradery

The aim behind this theme is to explain the respondents' belief systems to provide insight into the cultural-cognitive institution at play during their decision-making processes. An additional aim is to understand how visible the belief systems are in the respondents' business communications. This has been achieved through triangulation of company electronic business platforms.
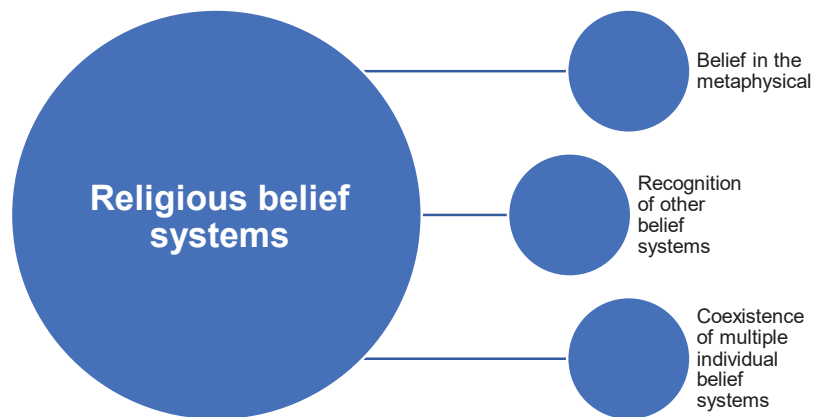
Figure 5

Religious Belief Systems

Source: Author's own

The interviews revealed a unified belief in the metaphysical. There was also an acknowledgement of the value of belief systems, including those that were not held by the respondents. Additionally, some of the individuals' beliefs were drawn from more than one belief system. However, in such cases, the respondents held one dominant belief system. The religious belief systems of the respondents encompassed five different religious paradigms, as shown in Table 7.

'I think it is basically around an Almighty God that is clearly something or someone bigger than what we see here;…there is a higher being somewhere, whatever it is, but there is something beyond…' (R4)

'I was baptised Greek Orthodox, and I agree with a lot of it. But I am very in love with many religions, and I will tell you why – because I see beauty in a lot of them.' (R5)

There are subtle differences in terms of what is emphasised in each belief system. Although the belief in giving back to society is present in all faiths, this belief appears to be particularly important in Islam. Furthermore, Islam appears to incorporate the community as an important stakeholder in its belief system.

'…the Ismaili community is very similar – very entrepreneurial, very close knit, very supportive of their own community. Nobody is dying hungry; nobody is uneducated – even though they live in some of the poorest parts of the world.' (R2)

The construct of creation is salient among those of Christian identity and among Christians who have additional religious affiliations. In addition, it appears that in Christianity, it is important to be in a relationship with God.

'I am a creation of a Creator, which means I also have the powers of creating my life.' (R4)

'…one God who is the Creator of the world…' (R9)

'My belief system is based on a personal relationship with God.' (R10)

An analysis of the secondary data revealed that there was no explicit reference to the business owners' religious belief systems on their electronic business platforms. The expression of their religious belief systems was minimally present.

Through the research method of triangulation, the researcher was able to verify an Ismaili Muslim respondent's belief in giving back to society. Furthermore, a respondent who identified as Christian, and who had additional religious affiliations, demonstrated a commitment to giving back to a non-profit organisation (NPO) that is engaged in the professional upliftment of women. Of importance is a Christian respondent with affiliation

to Judaism, who was the founder of an NPO with the main purpose of accelerating gender mainstreaming in Africa.

'…aims to equalise opportunities for the underserved children by providing them with digital learning tools in a bright and conducive environment.' (R2) (triangulation)

'…is an exciting and inventive organisation at the forefront of strategic thinking on gender mainstreaming in the private sector.' (R12) (triangulation)

Therefore, while the different belief systems have different emphases, the respondents perceive similarity in the belief systems of Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, as shown in Figure 5. The respondents' religious belief systems appear to be held privately, although giving back through NPOs is an interpreted outward manifestation of their beliefs. This conclusion informs the nature of religious belief systems as a feature of the cultural-cognitive institution, which may influence decision making in women-owned enterprises.

5.3.2   Theme 2: Compassionate Intention

Interview schedule questions:
1.   What are your religious values?
2.   How does your religion influence your life?
3.   What role does religion play in your business ventures?

There is consistency in the data about how values influence business conduct towards other stakeholders in the business and internationalisation ecosystem. There are a few distinct differences between the faith paradigms with regard to values. There are also similarities, regardless of the religious identity of respondents, as shown in Table 8.

'…the value systems were repeated from one religion to another.' (R7)

Table 8

Religious Values by Religious Identification

Religious Identification	Religious Values
Christian with other religious affiliations	Love for oneself, love for one's neighbour; Respect for others; Ethics; Equality; Surrender to God's will; Mindfulness; Selflessness; Respect; Equality; Made in God's image
Christian	Others are created in God's image; Value others; Honesty; Ethics; Love; Acceptance; Forgiveness; Kindness; Trusting God; Do not judge
Muslim	Integrity; Ethics; Fairness; Honesty; Value others; Only Allah judges; Obligation to oneself and to others
Hindu	Ethics; Respect; Humility; Equality
Judaism	Fairness; Equality; Compassion for others; Integrity; Ethics; Respect; Justice; Honesty

Source: Author's own

Furthermore, the data shows an indistinct interface between religious values and personal and business values. One respondent saw religious values as the originator of the other values. During their interview, another respondent was not able to disengage personal values from religious values. A third respondent did not identify personal values as having a religious basis. It should be noted that with respect to the last respondent, as evident in Table 8, the values of fairness and equality were identified by other respondents as religious values. It may be interpreted that this is support for the blurred

interface between religious and personal, business values mentioned earlier in the section.

'And most of the time, you know, those values are grown up in the form of a religious grounding.' (R4)

'An interesting question. I don't think I have ever thought about it like that – how that value system interacts with my value system.' (R10)

'Fairness, and fairness and equality – I wouldn't say they are religious values, but they are more my own particular values around fairness, around inclusion, around confronting inequality, confronting injustice, and I suppose part of it is also around respect – a kind of respectfulness.' (R6)

The religious value of love for others is evident in Table 8. The respondents placed value on others due to a belief that others are made in God Almighty's image. The religious value of love for others translated into respect, compassion and behaving mindfully towards others.

'I can't remember which book it is, but when they talk about the Ten Commandments, it is in the Old Testament as well. It says "Love they neighbour as you love thyself"…and how you treat those people and respecting other people.' (R1)

'And I also think part of it – and I don't know if it is Jewish or not – it is just a basic compassion for the other.' (R6)

'I believe that every person is created in God's image, every person – if God is like the sun, every person is like a little flame – and for that reason, every single person is important. And so for me, what is very important is that we care for each other, that we look after each other, that we don't walk over each other in our lives or business…' (R9)

'So that informs our business in that we feel every person should be valued, every person has something to offer, and if that little flame is somehow connected to that huge sun, there is so much more that can come from that; so we mustn't write off anybody or just go "Oh this bunch of people don't have anything to offer" or "They're

not important" or "They have reached their capacity". I don't believe that is true. I believe that everybody has so, so, so much more to offer.' (R9)

In addition to the above, the expression of integrity, as an important religious value, was evident in the sample. This value was shown to influence both the respondents' lives and businesses. In the business world, the value of integrity is practised as the behaviour of honesty.

'There is a saying in Judaism, like you have just got to always be integrous…' (R8)

'And then the other values of Islam are very much like I told you – you go through your life in a way that you are a person of integrity and that you are honest in your business practices. You do not lie to people. You do not cheat people…' (R2)

'Spiritually and professionally, I cannot lie…so in my business venture…in my practice…honesty is very big, very big.' (R4)

The importance placed on the religious value of ethics was evident across all faith paradigms, as is evident in Table 8. The respondents highlighted this in their business lives. An Islam respondent described the basis of her business as being linked to religious ethics. One Christian respondent described the challenge of adhering to her ethical values, where her ensuing ethical behaviour was interpreted as countering industry norms. A Jewish respondent perceived her ethical belief (and value) system as having application and meaning in her business. A Hindu respondent described her religious value of ethics as providing her with direction.

'In terms of the ethics of Islam, and something that we Ismailis take very seriously, I think the concept would be, how do we call it…capitalism, with a social view.' (R2)

'So I came into the industry to do it differently, but yet you do find these things challenge your ethics all of the time,….' (R10)

'So, there is an element, for myself, of identifying as Jewish and going to the synagogue and praying. But it has got to be so much more than that, and I think I just use it more as an ethical belief system and apply that in my business.' (R8)

'I think it provides direction in things that I do. It is sort of inherently there as a reminder of what is right and wrong. I think it is important because, you know, you often feel that even in a business environment, I mean people talk about ethics, and I think that is a very important statement because you are either ethical or not.' (R13)

The values of fairness and equality were described by respondents as important in both life and business. One respondent revealed that the value of equality prompted, in part, both her career and business decisions. Another described the value of equality as a metaphysical concept, of equality of all in the eyes of God Almighty. Finally, the value of viewing all people as equal, despite the social and religious norms of familial hierarchy, was an insight shared by a Christian respondent with an affiliation to ancestral beliefs.

'I mean for me – and it has in some ways defined my work – it is about social justice, and it is about creating a more just organisation and a more just world.' (R6)

'…we are all equal in the eyes of this higher being. No one is superior, no one inferior.' (R4)

'Obviously in the religion I grew up in, Christianity, it is about respecting the elders, but I have learnt, spiritually, that I respect anybody.' (R1)

One particular Christian respondent, who is affiliated to Hinduism, focused on her religious value system when making decisions about business deals. This respondent displayed a hierarchy of business priorities when deciding on whether to proceed with business opportunities. Her first priority, before considering financial decisions, was acknowledging the importance of the people involved in the deal. The respondent prioritised her value system above her religious affiliation.

'So, in the sense that sometimes even we have had to walk away from deals, where we realise the value system was not aligned – not necessarily because people were not in my same religion.' (R4)

Triangulation from all the respondents' company data showed that the religious values that they had identified was scarce in their company communications. The evidence in the following two excerpts were exceptions to this.

'Above all, we act with integrity.' (R4) (triangulation company data)

'Integrity and trust – we are nothing without our integrity, and absolute trust, both ways, is key to both our clients' and our success.' (R10) (triangulation company data)

Therefore, the respondents' religious values appear to be integrated into their personal and business values. Additionally, these religious values appear to be most evident in engagement with others in the business ecosystem, the human dimension. The most salient religious values are those of ethics, love for others, integrity, fairness and equality, as shown in Table 8. Religious values appear to be similar across the different religious paradigms, as noted in Table 8. However, the lived religious values described by the respondents are not well represented on their business platforms. Religious values inform personal and business values, and this confluence of humane values may influence business decisions in women-owned enterprises.

5.3.3   Theme 3: 'Co-inherence'

Interview schedule questions:
1.   How do you practise your religion?
2.   How does your religion influence your life?
3.   What role does religion play in your business ventures?

Table 9

Religious Identification, Religious Practice and Religious Influence

Religious Identification	Salient Religious Practices	Religious Influence on Personal and Business Spheres
Christian with other religious affiliations	Conversation with God; Praying before business meetings; Church attendance; Prayer meetings; Traditional healing; Studying spirituality; Starting meetings with prayer; Being active in the church; Listening to gospel music; Listening to Christian mentors on digital platforms	God provides purpose; God leads me to business opportunities; God provides me with peace; God shows me what to do; God teaches me; Mindfulness in behaviour; Called to higher standards of behaviour; Provides sense of belonging; Deference to God in business mentorship; Informs decisions on business deals; Is my guidebook
Christian	Hearing God's voice; Reading the Bible; Praying before business meetings; Church attendance; Singing in the choir; Meditation on God's word; Giving your thoughts to God	Origin of business; God guides me; God orchestrates; God calls me to higher Standards of behaviour; God provides me the Strength to continue Business in difficult circumstances; God provides my purpose; Put God's love onto others; Monthly business meetings with God; God provides me calm; God switches on my brain and tells me what to do; God designed us for deep intellectual thought; God wired us for love; God provides blessings in all negative situations
Muslim	Prayer – both personal (at home) and at mosque; Ramadan; Modesty; Everyday charity; Zakat;	2% of yearly earnings to charity; Answerable to something bigger; Origin of business; Provides meaning; Source of resilience in difficult situations;

	Religious meetings with Other women; Islamic community committees	Religion interrelated with life and business; Influences everything form morning until night; How you do things; How you deal with others; How you run your business; How you raise your children
Hindu	Prayer – both personal (at home) and at the temple; Diwali	Guiding hand in difficult business decisions; Orchestration
Judaism	Friday night prayers and dinner; Prayer at the synagogue; Keep kosher; Study Judaism	Influences moral compass and moral system; Influences choice of business deals; Inspires a course she teaches in business; Hospitality at home and in organisations; Observes rules and obligations of the religion; Provides comfort; Integration of science and religion; Informs the person who goes to work

Source: Author's own

The most common methods by which the respondents practised their faiths were through personal prayer, collective prayer and collective worship; by reading authoritative religious texts; by acquiring knowledge about a particular faith paradigm; and through religious celebrations and fasting, as shown in Table 9. The decision to consolidate the data on religious influence on life and business is based on the difficulty of separating the data, as most of the influences apply to both life and business simultaneously. This insight is depicted in the diagram below, Figure 6.
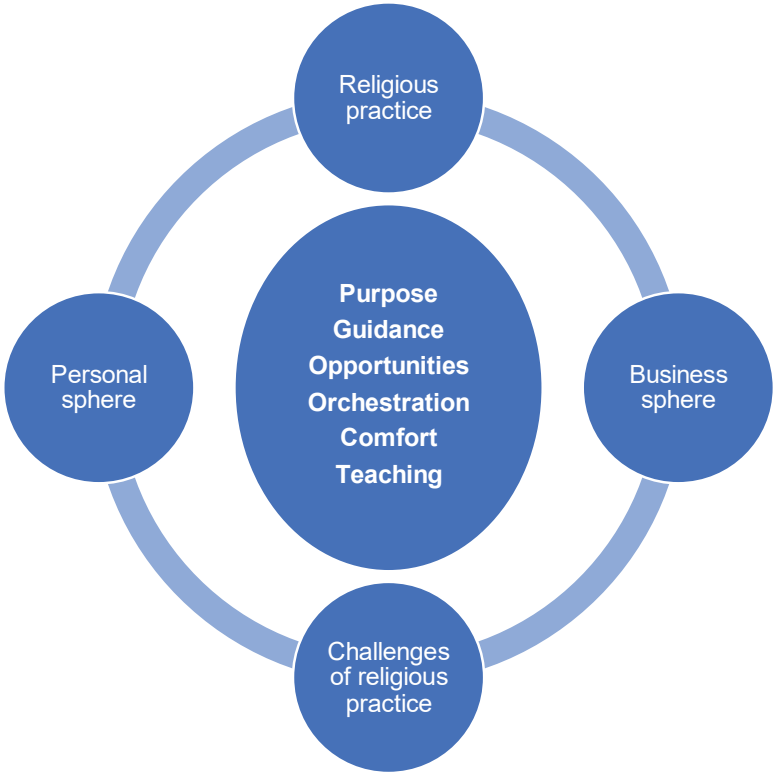
Figure 6

Integration of Religious Practice into Daily Life

Source: Author's own

The interview results showed that the integration of religion into the respondents' daily lives was consistent among all the respondents, from all faith paradigms. Religion influences respondents' lives both in the personal and professional domains.

> *'Oh, religion plays a huge part in my life. I mean, you would say that prayers is half an hour a day, but it impacts everything that you do from morning to night, and how you do it, and what you teach your kids, and how you deal with other people, and how you run your business. I think it impacts everything.'* (R2)

'Paul Tillich used to say that heaven is when you are totally focused on God – God is the centre of every moment of your life, and hell is those moments you turn away.' (R10)

The data revealed that religious practice extended to life within the respondents' organisations. This demonstrates the extent of influence of religious practice.

'For example, the concept of hospitality – it is in the Bible, examples: the stranger was invited into your home; the person was invited into your home. Now in my own practice, in my house, we have lots of people coming to stay and to eat, who we have never met, because that makes me happy, because they need somewhere to stay. But this idea of a hospitable organisation, and organisations are mostly inhospitable – particularly to certain types of people – so how do you create a hospitality in our organisations?' (R6)

One of the respondents described her favourite deity, Shiva Ardhanarishvara. She expressed the importance of treating the deity as a symbol of the integration of the metaphysical principles of masculine and feminine. She also mentioned the connection of such with business.

'So, it is really a deity that was just absolutely awesome because it was on this turntable, and it is a bronze statue, and it is half male-half female. The statue is exactly half male and half female, and when it turns around, you can see the form change from male to female,…just symbolised everything that I think is absolutely amazing in this universe, to recognise both your feminine and your male parts – and I think, to a large degree, it also influences business.' (R13)

The respondents practise prayer regularly, and prayer was the most visible expression of how they practised their faith at work. The Islamic practice of regular, daily prayer was evident, as was as the Christian practice of praying continuously throughout the day or, alternatively, in the morning and evening.

'So, we start meetings by prayer. I pray before every meeting, especially when I know that it is going to be difficult.' (R4)

'So, I like to, before I go into a meeting, I pray for all my clients.' (R3)

'…my sister and I will pray before our weekly meetings. We just had a meeting, before this one, with a business partner in Dubai, who is also a Christian, and we prayed at the end of that meeting.' (R9)

'I do pray, quietly to myself, all the time, for anything. Honestly. Nothing more to discuss, but I do. I pray a lot.' (R5)

The practice of listening to God Almighty's voice was particularly important to one of the Christian respondents.

'You know, for me, the ultimate of practising my faith, if I was a perfect person of faith, my ultimate ideal would be that I hear God 24/7, and I know exactly what He wants me to do with this client and this email and this person that is driving me nuts.' (R10)

The respondents interpreted religion as a guidebook in their daily lives. The concept of guidance was not elaborated upon, and the respondents did not explicitly mention seeking guidance from their faith when making decisions. However, the respondents sought guidance from God Almighty continuously, on a daily basis and at various junctures in the business calendar. One respondent described meeting God on a monthly basis to ask for guidance for the business month ahead.

'…religion is great for me because how it played the part in my everyday life is that I find it like a guidebook – I suppose we could say – it is a good guide…' (R5)

'The mornings are the time when I engage consciously, spiritually. I consciously seek for guidance.' (R4)

'…then we look ahead and ask for His guidance and wisdom over the coming month.' (R9)

Religious practice, such as prayer, acts as a source of comfort for the respondents.

'…about the power of prayer – I mean I pray, it is remarkable, but it has given me a huge amount of comfort.' (R6)

The respondents expressed the significant challenges of practising their faiths in their daily lives.

'…I mean, if He knows exactly what is going on, surely that is the best way to run a life, it is to slot into His plan. But ja*, I am not so good at that. I score myself at about 5 out of 100 on that one.'* (R10)

However, some of the respondents who practised their faiths did not practise certain **aspects** of their faith. One respondent did not practise the principles of Islamic finance, based on her interpretation of its contribution in business.

'So, I don't fall for all these things. They are meaningless. I mean, you have to unwrap the package and see what it is. So in my business, as far as financing and investments are concerned, I don't work in an Islamic way,…' (R2)

In addition, there was a belief in doing **more** than the daily practices. For the Jewish respondent who held this belief, the belief reflected the importance of acquiring further knowledge about Judaism.

'I attend lessons at 7:00 on a Monday morning. It is called… it is an aspect of Torah, and it is really around the spiritual dimension, which is what I am more interested in than the practices...' (R6)

In respect of the respondent who endeavoured to create welcoming organisations, electronic platforms revealed a commitment to creating welcoming organisations through the respondent's personal contribution to an NPO that delivers leadership education.

'…we design programmes that upskill, grow and transform leadership.' (R6) (triangulation)

Therefore, the data reveal an integration of religious practices into the daily lives of the respondents, regardless of their faith paradigms, as shown in Table 9. The influence of religion on personal and business spheres is further well documented in Table 9 and in Figure 6. The most common practice of faith is prayer. The respondents perceived the most salient religious influences on themselves and their enterprises to be those of guidance and comfort. There appears to have been an association between religious practice and religious influence through the vehicle of prayer.

5.3.4   Themes Summary

Research Question 1: How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

Therefore, while each respondent's belief system has different emphases, the respondents perceived similarity between the belief systems of Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, as is evident in Figure 5. In addition, religious values appeared to have been integrated into the personal and business values of the respondents. These religious values were most evident in their engagement with others in the business ecosystem (the human dimension). Finally, the data show that there was an integration of religious practice into the daily lives of the respondents, across all faith paradigms, as presented in Table 9.

5.4   Research Question 2

How does religion influence the location decision in early internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Interview schedule:
1.   How did you make the decision about where to internationalise your business?
2.   Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?

5.4.1   Theme 4: Coexistence

The overarching importance of networks in the location, 'how' and timing of internationalisation was evident in the data. The influence of networks on the location decision will not be discussed within this theme but is summarised in Table 10 below. Emphasis will be placed on dimensions of influence, other than networks, that influence the location decision. The influence of networks will then be discussed in the next section.

Table 10

Location Decision by Religious Identification, Mode of Entry and Location

Religious Identification	Mode of Entry	Location Decision Determinants	Internationalisation Locations

Christian with affiliation to the ancestors	Export of consulting and branding services	Business network; Previous work experience; Lived there previously; Market opportunities; Political stability	Kenya; Tanzania; Rwanda
Christian with affiliation to Hinduism	Export of consulting services	God-given purpose; Business networks; Personal motivation	Switzerland; Austria; Belgium
Greek Orthodox with affiliations to Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Roman Catholic faiths	Export of consulting services Export of associated personal care products	Family networks; Business networks; Cross-selling from export of consulting services	Cyprus; Dubai; Israel; Egypt; Singapore; Africa
Christian with affiliation to Judaism	Export of consulting services	Business networks; God's guidance	Kenya; Tanzania; Ghana; Senegal; Mauritius
Hindu with affiliation to Christianity	Export of engineering consulting services	Gods' guidance; Gods' orchestration; Family considerations; Previous work experience; Home country market conditions; Business networks; Host country level of development; Firm-specific advantages	Zambia; African continent; United Kingdom; Australia
Muslim, converted from Christianity	Export of consulting services	Academic networks; Business networks	France; United Kingdom
Ismaili Muslim	Residential property development	Global environment; Local market conditions; Financial opportunity; Personal motivation; Religious values; Personal access to a larger religious community	Dubai
Muslim, converted from Christianity	Export of products through e-commerce	Access to religious community; Market size; Logistic costs	United Kingdom
Judaism	Commercial property development	Market opportunity; Host country customer psyche; Host country skills; Host country education; Host country work ethic; Corruption in African countries	Poland

Judaism	Export of consulting services	Academic networks; Business networks; Religious affiliation affected Saudi Arabia internationalisation	United States
Christian	Export of consulting services	God's intervention; God given purpose; Personal network; Family network	United States; United Kingdom; Botswana
Christian	Export of consulting services	Market size; Shared English language; Previous work experience; Professional networks; Personal networks	United States; United Kingdom; Uganda; Rwanda; India; Dubai
Christian	Export of podcast educational content; Export of financial planning services	Market size; Unite States dollar (USD) revenue; Host country; Industry maturity; Lack of home country industry maturity; Personal considerations	United States; United Kingdom; Kuwait; Canada; Australia; 125 different countries

Source: Author's own

A Christian respondent with affiliation to ancestral beliefs did not describe her decision to extend her business to Kenya as being influenced by her religion. Her location decision was based on: a) her previous business experience in that country, b) time spent living in Kenya in her previous corporate role and c) market opportunities for her strategic branding consultancy.

> *'Now, having done the internal situation, there was a whole opportunity because I worked in Kenya for three years. I realised there were opportunities for South African brands to go to the rest of the continent in terms of opportunities and opportunity markets because they are less developed, and we are more developed, and, therefore, how do you begin to identify those markets?'* (R1)

An Islam respondent spoke of the economic influences on her location decision. She later self-reflected that her location decision was also influenced by her motivation to be closer to her parents in Pakistan. She then reasoned that care for the elderly was an Islamic belief.

'So, I actually did start a project there. I am actually working on it now, just as a diversification of my business, and, purely for economic reasons, it made sense.' (R2)

and

'So I tell you what, I mean, I go back to the point of Dubai made sense to me, not only because of the economic opportunity but to be closer to home, and I think there is, I think the religious value systems do play a role there, because where we come from in terms of religion and culture – and they are very interlinked, so it is very difficult – we take care of our own parents.' (R2)

A Jewish respondent shared about her experience in internationalising her commercial property development enterprise in Poland. She expressed the challenge of engaging with local partners due to historical religious persecution and the horror of the Holocaust.

'Ja, I mean, they kind of take you on a tour of Poland, and yes, you are not going to the concentration camps, but you are thinking more, "Was your grandfather in the concentration camps?", you know, "Was he the commander in the concentration camp while my grandfather was the one getting put into the concentration camp?" So very different, I have to say, quite a morally difficult place for me to actually have done business – to tell you the truth.' (R8)

In a display of courage, she simultaneously and precisely defined the business influences for entry into Poland, by development of shopping centres, as being a) a market opportunity, b) influenced by the consumer psyche and c) influenced by the host country skills and education.

'…so that is why it is relevant, not because I want to talk about Gucci and Prada – but they are such aspirational people, right, and they saw their neighbours next door, the Germans, being all fancy and dressed up, and it was such an aspiration to be part of Western Europe.' (R8)

'…it was understanding that they had the work ethic,…like the Germans, like I have never seen such competent people as in Poland,…' (R8)

Another Jewish respondent discussed the export of her consulting services to Saudi Arabia. The location decision was affected by her religious identification and prevented export of her services to that jurisdiction.

> *'But certainly, I have been invited to work in countries that were deeply anti-Semitic. For example, I got a huge project in Saudi Arabia, and they asked me to come, but I don't think they realised I was Jewish, and I decided not to take it.'* (R6)

A Christian respondent, who had drawn inspiration from the religious concept of creation to start her business, outlined market-related motivations for her location decision. She described a) market opportunity and b) common language as two of the influences in her choice of location, namely in the United States and United Kingdom.

> *'…or those countries is just, you know, where we see large markets of people – we see lots of people, especially, buying online training in the US. And that is what we are aiming for – just going for larger pools of clients.'* (R9)

> *'…we started marketing it to the UK and to the US, because we just felt, being English-speaking, we were a bit familiar with those markets, you know,…'* (R9)

Another Christian respondent identified a) market maturity and b) USD currency revenue as the main influences in her location decision. This decision was to move to the United States for her education podcast about money.

> *'You know, I only originally wanted to do my teaching stuff in dollars overseas, because there was no South African online market when I started. People would say to me, "How do I watch your podcast?", and I would be, "No, you listen – you don't watch".'* (R10)

However, certain Christian respondents suggested that they identified locations for internationalisation activities through the following: a) their belief system, b) a practice of prayer and c) their God-Almighty-given purpose.

> *'But, if it was somebody that wanted a bit more structure, I would really, as a Christian woman, say "Pray around it". Say, "God, I would like to take my business from here to Dubai. Please place somebody on my path. Or if that is not where You want me to be, put me in a different place".'* (R3)

> *'…you know, my appetite of saying "I am not confined into SA" and the prayer of Jabez help me realise that I will say "Bless me, Lord, and enlarge my territory". So,*

the blessing and knowing that I am a child of God, not confined to SA. I am a child born in the world, to make an impact in the world. So that is what drives me – that I believe in a bigger God. There is no way with what He has gifted me with, that it is only meant to be confined in one space.' (R4)

One respondent described the decision not to locate to another jurisdiction in Africa on the basis of an ethical belief system. Specifically, her decision was based on a reluctance to invest in proximal business environments that were perceived as corrupt.

'I wasn't going to pay a price; I have always done business in an ethical way, and I certainly wasn't going to go to a place where that was the modus operandi of the business community.' (R8)

In contrast, a Hindu respondent in the engineering consulting industry decided to work on the African continent on the basis of the abundance of market opportunities on the continent.

'I didn't even consider outside of the continent because I think there are so many opportunities on the continent. So, I looked more at the SADC region and East Africa, because I didn't want to spread myself too thinly because we weren't a really large company, and so we looked at opportunities in those regions.' (R13)

Therefore, a combination of both religious and non-religious influences informed the location decisions of the respondents, as shown in Table 10. In certain instances, the religious and non-religious influences on location decision were present simultaneously, as seen in Table 10. None of the respondents indicated that they were **only** influenced by religion in their location decisions. However, the respondents who identified with Judaism experienced significant religious influences in their internationalisation locations.

5.4.2   Theme 5: Non-religious Networks

The overarching importance of networks both in the location and the 'how' of internationalisation was evident in the data. The influence of networks on the location decision will be discussed within this theme and is also summarised in Table 10 above.
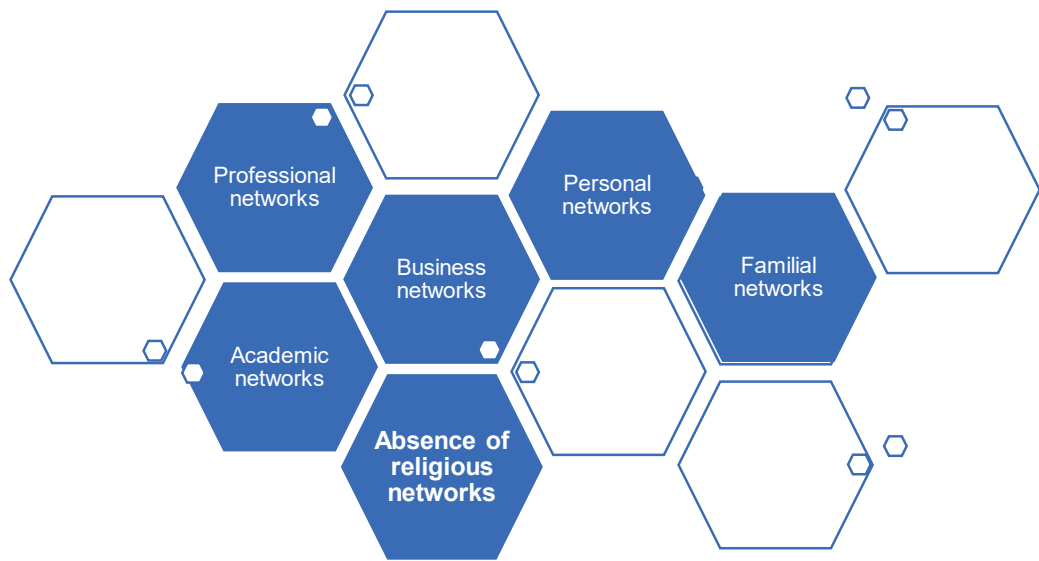
Figure 7

Typology of Network Influences on Internationalisation

Source: Author's own

The typologies of different networks that were shown to influence the location decision are described in Figure 7. There was no evidence that religious networks influenced the location decision. One Muslim respondent described this in the context of her business partner's choice pertaining to a residential property development in Dubai.

'No, I wouldn't say it is a religious connection. No, it is a personal connection but definitely not religious.' (R2)

Academic networks influenced internationalisation because they created international opportunities for the respondents, which required internationalisation decisions. One of these decisions was the choice of location.

'Because I am not working in France, but I had known these guys for years as being the one business school that was dealing with…theory.' (R7)

Familial networks also influenced internationalisation. One respondent harnessed familial networks in Dubai as a means to export her products. The respondent's direct family own a number of eateries and luxury stores in Dubai.

'…so we thought it would be a nice double whammy for the shop to have these beautiful products, and then if people in Dubai or Abu Dhabi, or wherever, want, they can go and collect from there too and purchase from there too.' (R 5)

Personal networks were relevant to certain respondents, for whom personal connections and networks created international business opportunities and steered internationalisation decisions. While on a personal holiday, one Christian respondent developed a personal connection with another woman, who was the owner of a large enterprise in the United Kingdom. This enabled the respondent to internationalise her commercial mediation services to the United Kingdom. Another Christian respondent described the export of creative intelligence consulting services to India as a result of a network established through her business partner's daughter.

'The UK lady, I actually met on holiday in Mauritius in December…and we just had a wonderful connection. So that is how that happened.' (R3)

'…so we came across the NGO through…daughter, and the founder of the NGO's daughter, were in a band together, and the founder lived, herself, in India for 10 or

12 years and has moved back and is now living in the Cape – so through those children,…and…met. They found out what each other did and…said, "Oh my goodness, you have to train our people in creative thinking".' (R 9)

Professional networks (in particular, one professional organisation and international network) were an important contributor to a) the introduction of international in-country partners in a property development in Poland and b) the provision of internationalisation opportunities in the export of creative intelligence consulting services in Uganda and Rwanda.

'Young President's Organisation, and in YPO, there is a property network, a real estate network. So, it is very easy to make contacts all over the world. I mean literally, we kind of chose the place, and then we found the contacts. It was actually very easy.' (R8)

'YPO, the YPO Group in Cape Town, loved it and talked to their friend in Central Africa.' (R9)

Business networks enabled certain respondents to access internationalisation opportunities and influenced their location decisions. Business networks that were established through previous corporate experience also assisted one respondent with the operational task of registering her company in Kenya.

'It was actually relatively easy because, as I said earlier on, the relationships I had, and because of the companies I worked for, I knew people who were powerful in their own right, and they knew people who were powerful…' (R1)

Two factors in the respondents' location decisions were the tenure of their networks and the typology of their networks. The multiplier effect of networks was also a factor. More than one respondent referred to the temporality of networks, as their networks were longstanding in nature. For one respondent of Christian identity, with Hindu affiliation, the development of networks was a strategic choice to develop herself as an international brand. Another Jewish respondent described how she had established herself as a consultant to a major company in the United States through the multiplier effect of networks.

'So, back in the day, when I started building those relationships…' (R4)

'I met five people, and it is all around multipliers – those five people knew five people, knew five people – and then I was a name, they had seen it, they didn't even know where I came from,…' (R6)

The influence of networks on internationalisation and location decisions is presented in Figure 7 and Table 10. The typology of networks included academic, business, familial, personal and professional networks. The tenure and the multiplier effect of these networks appeared salient. Of importance was the apparent absence of the influence of religious networks.

5.4.3   Themes Summary

Research Question 2: How does religion influence the location decision in early internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

In summary, a combination of both religious and non-religious influences informed the respondents' location decisions, as is evident in Table 10. None of the respondents indicated basing their location decisions on **only** religious influences. The influence of networks on internationalisation and location decisions is outlined in Figure 7 and in Table 10. Of importance was the absence of the influence of religious networks on the location decision.

5.5   Research Question 3

How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Interview schedule:
1.   How did you make the decision about how to internationalise your business?
2.   Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?

5.5.1 Theme 6: Low- risk Commitment

Table 11

Mode of Entry by Religious Identification

Religious Identification	Mode of Entry
Christian with affiliation to other faiths	Export of consulting and branding services; Export of consulting services; Export of products; Investment in enterprises with international exposure
Hindu with affiliation to Christianity	Acquisition of consulting services company
Muslim	Export of consulting services; Export of products; Residential property development
Judaism	Export of consulting services; Greenfield investment in commercial property development
Christian	Export of consulting services

Source: Author's own

The export of services (via informal teams) and products presented as a common mode of entry in the interviews, as seen in Table 11. The level of entry commitment was generally low, as illustrated in Figure .

'I have now managed to put together a really nice team, within SA and within Dubai, who are working really well together with me, sort of in the process, and we have taken it far. We break ground soon, and all that hard work of designing and engineering and approvals and tendering, and all, is almost done.' (R2)

Another low-commitment export mode into other markets was affiliates in other jurisdictions.

'So, one of the things I will build in, at some stage, is affiliate selling, where you do have partners who sell and get 30% of the commission.' (R10)

There were exceptions. A Hindu respondent conducted an acquisition that facilitated access to larger engineering projects.

'It was actually an acquisition of the local office of…So, it was the first time it had ever been done in our industry because normally it is the other way around.'
(R13)

Therefore, the mode of entry was low-commitment. There was no obvious religious influence or pattern in the data indicating that a particular type of entry mode prevailed when there was a particular religious identification. The evidence of this conclusion can be found in Table 11.

5.5.2   Theme 7: Informal Partnerships

Table 12

Influence of Religious Beliefs and Values on Business Type at Internationalisation

Religious Identification	Business Type	Influence on Business Type
Christian with affiliation to the ancestors	Strategic alliances in host country; Registered company entity in one jurisdiction	Business networks in host country
Christian with affiliation to Hinduism	No partnership or alliance; Investment in local businesses that operate internationally	Professional networks in host country
Greek Orthodox with affiliations to Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Roman Catholic faiths	No partnership or alliance	Business network in host country; Personal network in host country; Digital platforms
Christian with affiliation to Judaism	Entry in alliance with local corporate partners	Business network in host country
Hindu with affiliation to Christianity	Acquisition of local enterprise with international offices; Collaborations	Religious belief system; Opportunistic in approach by acquired company
Christian	No partnership or alliance	Business network in home country; Personal network in host country; Religious belief system
Muslim, converted from Christianity	No partnership or alliance	Academic network in host country
Ismaili Muslim	Partnership in host and home country	Business network; Religious belief system; Religious values
Muslim, converted from Christianity	No partnership or alliance	Digital platforms
Judaism	Partnership in host and home country	Competence of partner; Knowledge of the industry; Religious value system of home country partner
Judaism	Project-based affiliations	Competence of associates; Religious values

Christian	Partnership in host country	Business network; Personal network
Christian	Affiliate partnership in host country; Digital platform	Digital platforms; Religious belief system

Source: Author's own

For one respondent, digital platforms enabled the export of products to Dubai.

> '*So, we have been sending to Dubai, where people go on to the website, and they go onto Instagram, and they order individually in any way.*' (R5)

One Christian respondent with ancestral beliefs described the setup of a small satellite office for host country legitimacy. This was done on the advice of a local partner who was based in Kenya.

> '*So, she gave me the blueprint, if you want to call it that, in terms of what I needed to do – to an extent where she even assisted me by saying, "And for you to be taken seriously here, you need to have an office". It's a virtual office, basically.*' (R1)

In the export of consulting services, one type of business model noted was informal partnerships. This was evident for a respondent entering a new international market, namely Rwanda.

> '*And I went and also did the same thing in Rwanda, but there I partnered with a woman who was South African, who was based in Rwanda…*' (R1)

One respondent relied on formal partnerships during the development of her commercial property project in Poland. The choice of local partner for the project was made on the basis of a) their competence and b) the fact that they had a similar religious identity to that of the respondent. The choice of Polish partner was based on a) local knowledge and b) understanding that a local partner was a prerequisite for success in commercial property development.

> '*Okay, so my partner here, I can tell you, was the CEO of one of the largest listed property companies in SA, so I mean, I trusted him. I thought he was the genius brain of property in SA.*' (R8)

and

> *'And there was no question that having similar backgrounds, similar networks,…I felt comfortable. And I don't think I would have ventured into a place so far away without somebody that I felt completely that I could relate to and understood my value systems, and we could have supper together on Friday night.'* (R8)

and

> *'I mean, I think the South Africans that have tried to do property overseas, where they haven't gone with local partners, I mean they see the South Africans coming…'* (R8)

and

> *'The cultural differences probably expanded, didn't decrease.'* (R8)

A Hindu respondent described how an acquisition of the local office of a multinational company in South Africa enabled increased access to international markets. Of significance is that the acquisition terms included participation in larger international projects. This decision was made for the purpose of giving back to the civil engineering profession. This was negotiated in order for young civil engineer professionals in South Africa to develop their skills and experience through participation in large projects in the United Kingdom and Australia. As mentioned in Section 5.2, 'giving back' was salient in the religious belief systems of the women respondents.

> *'I have been working there before, as…, before we became…, but in terms of the opportunities this acquisition has created is that my teams are now working on projects in the UK and Australia,…because one of the things that actually impacts young professionals is the fact that, locally, there aren't these big-scale projects that excite them.'* (R13)

Religious values and belief systems affected the respondents' choice of business partners, as mentioned previously. An Islamic belief system prompted one respondent to change her business model in the residential property market in Dubai.

> *'Was there any religious motivation to now move to that model?...in this first project it just happened to be that way. But I think, going forward, I think the religious motivation might be that I don't want to tie myself up financially because it gives me less flexibility in the last 20 years of my life, when I am really more inclined to do the "give back" part than the "make" part.'* (R2)

and

'Now whether we do it on a fee-based model, whether we do it on a profit-participation model is really, if you ask Islam, it would always be on a profit-participation model. So that is the religious side of Islam because, as I said, Islam is a social capitalistic religion, which means it wants everyone to make money. Don't settle for a fee; don't settle for an interest. You must be an entrepreneur. You must make profit, and that is what the religious thingy is.' (R2)

Therefore, according to the data, the business models were more informal, with widespread partnerships and alliances, as shown in Table 12. The choice of partners may have been influenced by religious values and belief systems, as shown in Table 12. One Jewish respondent's choice was influenced by the fact that she shared a religious value system with her local partner. For a Muslim respondent, her religious belief system influenced her decision to change her international business model. This decision was made in response to a) the Islamic belief in giving back and b) the Islamic practice of applying a profit-sharing financial model in one's business. A Hindu respondent's acquisition terms were influenced by the religious belief system of giving back to her profession. In summary, in the internationalisation of women-owned enterprises, there was somewhat of a religious influence in the respondents' decisions about what business model to employ on market entry.

5.5.3 Theme 8: God Almighty's Unsystematic Pattern
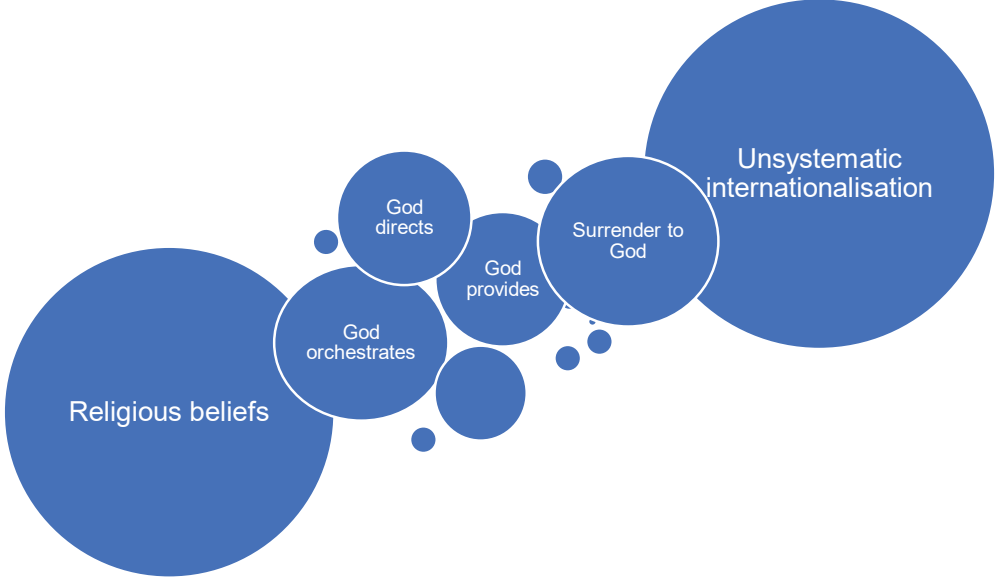
Figure 8

Religious Beliefs' Influence on Unsystematic Internationalisation

Source: Author's own

'So, I would love to say we have this brilliant strategy, and it has worked to our strategy, but no. It has kind of worked out however it has, haphazardly, and that's how it is.' (R9)

'I didn't think to internationalise. It was just how it happened.' (R5)

Table 13

The Influence of Religious Beliefs and Values on Unsystematic and Strategic Patterns of Internationalisation

Religious Identification	Religious Influence on Pattern of Internationalisation	Unsystematic Pattern of Internationalisation	Strategic Pattern of Internationalisation
Christian with affiliation to Hinduism	Religious belief that God orchestrates success	Opportunities for internationalisation came to respondent	Strategic plans in place for internationalisation
Hindu with affiliation to Christianity	Religious belief that higher powers orchestrated the acquisition	Unsystematic in that the acquired entity approached the respondent	Not present in respect of the acquisition of local office of international company
Christian	Religious belief that God is directing respondent in the choice of who to work with internationally; Religious belief that God provides opportunities	Export opportunities came to the respondent in her consulting enterprise	Not present in exporting respondent services
Christian	Religious belief that God provides opportunities; Religious belief that respondent did not listen to God's voice sufficiently in internationalisation, and this resulted in less return on internationalisation efforts	Export opportunities provided by God to the respondent	Strategy present to export educational services
Muslim	Religious value of care for parents and the elderly; Religious belief system of giving back; Religious belief system that a profit-participation model is best; Non-adherence to religious prescription not to take loans	Residential property development opportunity came to the respondent	Not present in exporting respondent services
Judaism	Religious values and shared belief system in choice of home country partner	Not present in investment in international commercial property	Strategy present to invest in international commercial property project
Judaism	Not present	Present in export of human resource consulting services	Strategy not mentioned

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Greek Orthodox with affiliations to Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, Roman Catholic faiths Christian	Not present	Present in export of consulting services and products	Strategy in place to export through digital platforms and retail stores
Muslim	Not present	Not present	Strategy in place to export products
Christian with affiliation to ancestral beliefs	Not present	Not present in strategic brand consultancy	Strategy in place for internationalisation
Christian	Not present	Unsystematic pattern in export of creative intelligence consulting services	Strategy in place for internationalisation
Muslim	Not present	Unsystematic pattern in export of financial consulting services	Strategy not mentioned
Christian with Judaism affiliation	Not present	Not present in NPO in gender mainstreaming	Strategy present

Source: Author's own

Religious belief in the metaphysical may be one of the antecedents of both unsystematic and strategic decisions. The belief in God may be an antecedent in the unsystematic pattern of business growth and internationalisation. There was a belief among respondents in God as a provider of business. This was particularly true of the respondents who are of Christian faith.

'I believe that God provides everything in my business.' (R10)

'I strongly believe that everybody that comes across my door is God-sent. I don't advertise. I have never advertised. So, all my work is word of mouth, and I believe everybody that walks through my doors, or that I have the pleasure of dealing with, has been God-sent.' (R3)

One of the respondents suggested that the metaphysical (in her case, a higher form) had orchestrated her business and internationalisation decisions.

'I think I have been provided a guiding hand in every step of the way –…It's weird, because sometimes I just sit back, and I think it is all orchestrated by somebody. I feel it is not real; I question it sometimes…it is like coincidental. It is like weird. I can't explain it to you, but it is as though I kind of get the feeling that I am just playing a part in this thing, and I am in it and playing a part, but I am not sure what the outcome is going to be. But I am just being directed in terms of what I need to do.' (R13)

There was also a belief in God Almighty as the orchestrator of success.

'…by God's Grace having commission after commission, and I always say, "Thank you, God". I don't take it for granted,…' (R4)

There was a belief that God Almighty gave direction for new international business ventures.

'But then God asked me to start helping people, you know…large part of the international business started with me doing work for…' (R3)

Additionally, there was a belief that God Almighty provided international business opportunities.

'I am grateful for everybody that I still must work with in the future. Do you know what I then see? I see me standing, holding the whole globe. I see my holding the globe…It doesn't matter. It is what God gives.' (R3)

Another respondent also placed value on surrendering to God while simultaneously planning.

'…a level of surrendering to say: once you have done your best, let God do the rest. Because it doesn't matter how much I can plan, there will always be curveballs.' (R4)

The data demonstrates the relevance and influence of religious beliefs to/on an opportunistic pattern to business and internationalisation decisions. This is evident in Table 13 and Figure 8.

5.5.4   Theme 9: God Almighty's Strategic Pattern

The respondents' belief systems were also drawn upon by the respondents in a strategic manner. One Muslim respondent believed that Islam supports entrepreneurship.

'…you must be an entrepreneur.' (R2)

For one of the respondents, the belief in creation provided meaning. This is because God was the inspiration in the creation of her business.

'He created us to be creative, and that is actually the driving force behind our business because I believe that is what we are made to do – be creative, be more like Him.' (R9)

Furthermore, one Christian respondent's strategic decisions about internationalisation were informed by her belief that God Almighty has a purpose for her.

'In terms of my business, there have been many times where I have considered giving up my teaching business because it has drained a lot of money from us. Having said that, I believe that this is my purpose. I believe that God put me on the earth to teach people about money.' (R10)

Similarly, another respondent believed that God is her company CEO. She noted that she was strategic in her monthly meetings with God.

> *'Another way that we express our faith in our business, is that…and I monthly have a CEO meeting with our CEO. It is a CEO morning, where we review the month and look ahead. We do that independently in our homes with our CEO, who is God.'* (R9)

The women who owned medium or large enterprises expressed non-religious strategic influence in their decisions.

> *'…it was a strategic plan.'* (R8)

However, one of the respondents described intentionality, in concert with her belief in God Almighty, as an orchestrator of success.

> *'Yes, I worked hard. Yes, my mum, but it can only be God.'* (R4)

Therefore, there is concurrent data, also evident in Table 13, that religion may be influential in the strategic decisions of women-owned enterprises. These decisions include internationalisation decisions.

5.5.5 Themes Summary

Research Question 3: How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

In summary, the mode of entry was low-commitment, with no obvious religious influence or pattern in the data indicating that a particular type of entry mode prevailed when there was a particular religious identification. However, in terms of internationalisation, there was somewhat of a religious influence in the decision on what business model to employ on market entry. At a granular level, the religious influence was evident in the religious belief system that God Almighty orchestrates and provides. An additional influence in the choice of business model was shared religious values. The data showed a religious influence on the pattern of internationalisation, most notably on an unsystematic pattern. There was some religious influence on a strategic pattern of internationalisation, but this was analysed by the researcher as being less influential than on the unsystematic

pattern. The granular nature of religious influence on the unsystematic pattern is that God Almighty orchestrates, provides, assists and gives purpose.

Table 14

Most Important Themes in Relation to Research Questions

Research Questions	Most Important Findings
Research Question 1 How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?	Religious comradery; Compassionate intention; 'Co-inherence'
Research Question 2 How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Coexistence; Non-religious networks
Research Question 3 How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Low-risk commitment; Informal partnerships; God Almighty's unsystematic pattern; God Almighty's strategic pattern

Author's own

Table 15

Research Question, Themes and Nature of Religious Influence

Research Question	Research Question	Themes	Nature of Religious Influence
1	How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?	Religious comradery; Compassionate intention; 'Co-inherence'	The perceived similarity between different belief systems; Religious values merge into personal and business values; Religious values prompt a compassionate intention; Religious belief systems and practices influence both personal and business spheres
2	How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Coexistence; Non-religious networks	The location decision is based on the coexistence of religious and economic influences; The influence of networks on location decisions is evident; Of importance is the absence of the influence of religious networks
3	How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Low-risk commitment; Informal partnerships; Unsystematic pattern; Strategic pattern	There is no clear pattern of the influence of religious identification on mode of entry and commitment; There was somewhat of a religious influence in the decision on what business model to employ on market entry (God's orchestration, God's provision, religious value of giving back, religious values similarity); The influence of religious beliefs on the unsystematic approach to business and pattern of internationalisation is evident (God provides, God orchestrates, God provides purpose, God assists); However, there is concurrent data, also evident that religious beliefs may be influential in the strategic pattern of internationalisation (God's purpose, God's management)

Source: Author's own

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 5, this study seeks to contribute knowledge to the research gap pertaining to decision making in women-owned enterprises, particularly in respect of the influence of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution. The acquisition of new knowledge is specifically in the context of South African women-owned enterprises that have internationalised.

In Chapter 2, a literature review discussed the most recent academic discourse about the influence of religion on internationalisation decisions. To date, a large proportion of the work in this regard has focused on Islam, in contexts where Islam is the predominant religion. The body of work is nascent. The literature review, nevertheless, enabled the formulation of both the research questions and the research propositions, which were discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 explained the methodology of the study. Data was gathered using a method aligned to qualitative research. The method was semi-structured interviews, which were conducted using the Zoom platform. The purpose of this was to answer the research questions. The qualitative data was analysed using ATLAS.ti, as documented in Chapter 4. The findings arising from the data analysis are discussed in Chapter 5, primarily through the generation of key themes from the analysis.

The aim of Chapter 6 is to reflect on the relationship between the findings in Chapter 5 and the literature review in Chapter 2. The similarities and differences between these two streams will be discussed and interpreted in this chapter. Table 16 provides a summary of the research questions, research propositions and study themes.

Table 16

Most Important Findings from Chapter 5

Research Question	Research Proposition	Chapter 5 Themes
Research Question 1: How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?	Research Proposition 1: The influence of religious beliefs, values and practices is integrated into decision making.	Theme 1: Religious comradery Theme 2: Compassionate intention Theme 3: 'Co-inherence'
Research Question 2: How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Research Proposition 2: The location decision is influenced by the coexistence of religious and economic influences.	Theme 4: Coexistence Theme 5: Non-religious networks
Research Question 3: How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?	Research Proposition 3: Religion influences the entry mode, entry commitment and pattern of internationalisation.	Theme 6: Low-risk mode Theme 7: Informal partnerships Theme 8: God Almighty's unsystematic pattern Theme 9: God Almighty's strategic pattern

Source: Author's own

6.2   Discussion

The structure for the discussion in Chapter 6 will be guided by both the research questions and the associated research propositions. The chapter will conclude with a conceptual framework, which is an outcome of the comparison between the findings and the literature.

6.2.1   Research Question 1

How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

Research Proposition 1: The influence of religious beliefs, values and practices is integrated into decision making.

6.2.1.1   Research Question 1: Discussion

6.2.1.1.1   Introduction

The comparative analysis and interpretation that characterises this section will commence with the three key academic arguments that religious beliefs, religious values and religious practices influence, and are integrated into, enterprise decisions. The first argument and theme relates to religious comradery. The second argument and theme relates to the compassionate intention of enterprises and individuals, and the third argument and theme relates to the 'co-inherence' of the metaphysical and material within individuals and the enterprise.

6.2.1.1.2   Religious Comradery

There is concurrence between the current literature (on spiritual comradery) in Chapter 2 and the findings (related to religious comradery) in Chapter 5. This is in respect of the influence of religious comradery at the individual level of analysis. As discussed in Chapter 2, 'spiritual comradery' is described as a mutual attraction between individuals on the basis of personal faith (Richardson & Rammal, 2018).

The findings concur in that, while there are different emphases in each belief system, the respondents perceived similarities in their belief systems. Specifically, the respondents

perceived the belief systems of Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism to be somewhat alike. These findings are described in Chapter 5.3.1.

In addition, a number of respondents identified primarily with one belief system while having affiliations with other belief systems (Table 7). This was not anticipated at the outset of the research. Nonetheless, at least one respondent who identified only with Christianity spoke to her perception of the similarity in various religious belief systems. Richardson and Rammal (2018) envisage Islam as the external boundary of a shared belief system. The findings in this study suggest that religious comradery may be extended beyond one specific religious paradigm. As noted, the women in the sample identified with Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.

Jimenez et al. (2019) have found that a diversity of religious belief systems led to project failure in infrastructure projects. This scholarly assertion is not supported in the current study. A Hindu respondent with Christian affiliation, who owns an engineering consulting business, works on infrastructure projects. She did not describe religious diversity as an influence on project failure. In fact, this was mentioned sparingly.

Scholars suggest that the depth of a Muslim entrepreneur's faith is a determinant of the ability of their religious beliefs to inform their decision making (Younis et al., 2022). Indeed, the respondents for this study may have been self-selected; in other words, the study appealed to those who are drawn to the topic and research questions. The respondents described their religiosity as significant (Chan et al., 2022). This may result in high religious knowledge capital about their own faith paradigms as well as other faith paradigms. This may contribute to spiritual comradery and an understanding of other faith paradigms at an individual level.

In conclusion, there is agreement between scholars' propositions about spiritual comradery and the findings from the study. The religious belief systems to which women in the study concertedly adhered may have created mutual affinity across religious boundaries. In addition, the study noted spiritual comradery among women of different faith paradigms, not only of the Islamic faith. This individual, religious comradery may have facilitated decision making within and by their enterprises.

6.2.1.1.3   Compassionate Intention

A further argument harnessed from the literature is that the religious values of fairness and honesty inform a compassionate intention (House et al. 2002; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). This organisational compassionate intention leads women entrepreneurs to engage with others with transparency.

Compassionate intention in an enterprise implies placing value on self-sacrifice (love for others) and fairness (House et al., 2002). The findings in this study support the assertion of these scholars but were espoused at an individual level. The most common religious values held by the individual respondents were a) love for others and b) the ethical values of fairness and equality (Table 8). However, these religious values were minimally evident in triangulation of the respondents' electronic business platforms, as described in Chapter 5.3. Some of the business platforms demonstrated a **scarcity** of espoused religious values. The raises the logical question of whether the enterprises in the study were actually compassionate or humane. It is asserted by the researcher that individual and enterprise levels in this theme are somewhat proximal, due to the micro size of the enterprises.

The definitional elements of intrinsic religiosity are revisited to aid the comparison and to provide further explanation (Bergin, 1980a). An intrinsic orientation places priority on an understanding of a religious, authoritative text and a personal search for meaning (Allport & Ross, 1967). Conceptually, religious values are held privately. A suggestion to explain the scarcity of communicated religious values may be the respondents' intrinsic religiosity (Bergin, 1980a). The practice of their faiths may be oriented to keeping their religious values private.

Another explanation for the dearth of religious values present in the respondents' business communications, as explained in Chapter 5.3.2, may be found in the literature – Rietveld and Hoogendoorn (2021) assert that religious values and entrepreneurial values are opposite in nature. The scholars deem religious values to be those protecting the status quo and entrepreneurial values to be those supporting change.

However, the findings do not support these latter scholarly assertions – the respondents did not unanimously feel dissonance between their business and religious values. This is evident (and is discussed further) in Chapter 5.3.2. On the contrary, the respondents perceived their religious values as enablers that guide their entrepreneurial and business

decisions, particularly in the value that they placed on others. Additionally, religious values guided the creation of respondents' enterprises and provided a behavioural benchmark for personal and business decisions.

These enabling assertions from the respondents are evident in the literature. The ethical and religious value of fairness is further discussed by Tlaiss and McAdam (2021), regarding a sample of Islamic women entrepreneurs. The scholars assert that the value of fairness was evident in the Islamic business women's relationships with their stakeholders. This scholarly assertion has been confirmed in this study, as is evident in Table 8 and in Section 5.5 in the discussion of the theme about compassionate intention. In addition, in this study, the value of fairness was esteemed by women of Jewish faith.

Furthermore, the work of Henley (2017) should be considered in the explanation for why religious values are not consistently visible on the business platforms of the respondents' enterprises. The unconscious interconnectedness of religious values with business and personal values has been explained in the literature and the findings. It follows that this may mean that for the women-owned enterprises consulted in this study, it may not be a priority to communicate their business values.

A review of the size of the businesses, which is evident in Table 7, indicated that the majority of the respondents' businesses are micro businesses, based on the enterprise size guidelines provided by the Banking Association South Africa (BASA). In addition, it is evident from Chapter 5 that some of the respondents were engaged in informal business models during internationalisation. This could mean that, given the resource constraints of small businesses, it may not have been a priority to espouse religious values. The limitations of international business theory in explaining the behaviour of small, resource-constrained entities are discussed by international entrepreneurship scholars (Reuber et al., 2018; Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018).

In conclusion, there appears to be agreement between the literature and the findings in respect of the influence of religious values on the compassionate intention of both enterprises and individuals. This aforementioned compassionate intention was facilitated particularly by the religious values of fairness and honesty. Although espoused individual religious values were not visible at the enterprise level in the study, the respondents' a) internal orientation in respect of their religious practice, b) the unconscious nature of religious values, c) the interconnectedness of religious and business values, and d) the

size and priorities of the enterprises are possible reasons for this lack of visibility of religious values.

6.2.1.1.4   'Co-inherence'

'Co-inherence' in Belief Systems

A belief system that holds God's creation to be an important pillar may be influential in the theme of 'co-inherence' (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019). These scholars assert the presence of 'co-inherence' in their work. The definition of 'co-inherence', for ease of comparison, is the presence of principles of faith, manifested in material contexts.

This belief pillar of creation is further described by Tlaiss and McAdam (2021) in respect of Muslim women entrepreneurs who follow an Islamic tenet that business creation gives back by, for example, creating employment. The findings in Chapter 5 overwhelmingly support the 'co-inherence' of belief systems in women-owned enterprises. Of importance is that the respondents who expressed their faiths as the motivation to create their enterprises are Christian, Jewish and Muslim (Table 9). Furthermore, the decision to create international ventures was influenced by the religious beliefs that a) this was God Almighty's purpose for the respondents and b) international business opportunities are God Almighty's provision. This is noted in Table 10 and Table 12.

'Co-inherence' in Religious Values

Neubert (2019) asserts that within organisations, human beings are the sum of both their instrumental and immaterial natures. The findings from this research confirm this assertion from the literature. In Table 7, there is evidence that the respondents are scientifically minded, in view of their academic qualifications (Table 7). The respondents' immaterial natures are presented in Table 9, which outlines the practice and influence of their religions on their personal lives and enterprises. The influence of religion on their personal lives and enterprises is considerable, as indicated in Table 9.

Henley (2017) further contributes to the discussion of human material and immaterial natures by asserting the presence of unconscious values. This assertion is supported by Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019), who suggest that religious values are an inherent characteristic of individuals. The 'co-inherence' of religious values is evident in the current study. As noted in Section 5.3.2, in the interviews, the study respondents described how religious values influence their behaviour in their personal lives and in their enterprises. It was clear that their behaviour and, by interpretation, their decisions

in respect of others in their ecosystem is/are informed by extension, by their religious values. Their religious values inform the argument for 'co-inherence' in their business ventures in the following manner: a) by placing value on others who are created in God Almighty's image, b) by obliging them to be honest with others, as interpreted in Islam and c) by demonstrating compassion for others (Section 5.3.2 and Table 8).

'Co-inherence' in Religious Practice

The respondents' practice of religion is further demonstration of 'co-inherence' (Bergin, 1980 a Smith et al., 2019). The respondents described daily practice of their faiths and the inclusion of religious practice into their enterprise activities. This 'co-inherence' of religious practice in their enterprises was most evident among those of Christian faith **and** those of Christian faith who have other religious affiliations. All the respondents were able to confirm the salience of religious practice in their daily personal and professional lives, as described in Section 5.3.3 (with evidence in Table 9). As described, the practice of prayer is important in all the religious paradigms mentioned in the study. The respondents described praying before business meetings and commencing meetings with prayer.

The evidence of 'co-inherence' of religious practice among Christian respondents is notable, given the literature review on the Islamic practice of *istishara* (Kavas et al., 2020). An explanation may, simplistically, lie in the sample demographics – eight of the 13 respondents had some affiliation to Christianity. However, the introduction of new literature not included to date, may provide insights. Werner (2008) confirmed the 'co-inherence' of religious belief systems of a God-given purpose. The author also confirmed the aspirations of Christian respondents to be holy.

A further comparison is found in the business models of enterprises. In the study by Smith et al. (2019), 'co-inherence' was evident in social enterprises. In the current study, the sample was predominantly of for-profit enterprises. The study **does** appear to demonstrate the presence of 'co-inherence' in profit-orientated, women-owned enterprises in South Africa.

Karakas and Sarigollu (2019) suggest that religious practice in the workplace may give rise to feelings of connection to others and a sense of responsibility toward stakeholders who are outside the enterprise and who are affected by the enterprise. This assertion was confirmed by the current study, as the women who practise their faiths felt compelled

to behave according to higher standards, particularly in respect of their customers (Section 5.4 and Table 9). The study also revealed that an obligation to others was keenly perceived by Muslim respondents.

'Co-inherence' in Decision Making

Busentiz and Lichtenstein (2019) argue that decision making cannot be fully explained by facts and is subject to bias. In the current study, the women respondents of all the faith paradigms described the influence of religion on their decisions. In Table 9 it is evident that for the respondents, God Almighty a) gives purpose, b) provides opportunities, c) guides, d) teaches and informs, e) provides a source of resilience and f) orchestrates.

Kavas et al. (2020) describe the inclusion of religious values and practices in the operations and decision making of an Islamic, family owned and export-driven enterprise. The findings in this regard (in Chapter 5) may not be directly applicable to this study, since none of the women-led enterprises in the research were described as family owned, and the current study investigated different faiths (not only that of Islam). However, a comparison with this particular study from the literature is undertaken on the basis of the findings in Chapter 5.3 and Table 8, which demonstrate the similarity in both religious belief systems and values between the different faith paradigms.

It should be noted that the Islamic practice of *istishara,* mentioned previously in the discussion about the 'co-inherence' of religious practice, appears to be mirrored in the current study, in the practice of one Christian respondent (Kavas et al., 2020). This Islamic practice, described in the literature, is the practice of seeking counsel. This may occur when important decisions are being made. The process has meaning through Islamic principles. As noted in Section 5.5, a Christian respondent in the study described a similar process of monthly meetings with her CEO. Her CEO is God. The respondent described invoking God's guidance for the month ahead.

As is documented in Chapter 5.5, the study found evidence of religious influence on the business decisions of women respondents. This was comprehensively documented in the introductory paragraph of this section. The most salient influences are a) religious guidance and b) religious comfort. These influences appear to be facilitated through the prevailing practice of prayer.

In conclusion, 'co-inherence' of religious belief systems is most evident through the religious tenet of creation. This influences the decision to start enterprises, both in one's home country and abroad (Tliass & McAdam, 2021). The 'co-inherence' of religious values is evident in the decisions that are made in relation to all stakeholders within a business and the international business ecosystem (Henley, 2017; Neubert, 2019). The 'co-inherence' in religious practice appears to be present in both Muslim and Christian faiths, and 'co-inherence' of religious practice appears to influence decision making (Kavas et al., 2020; Werner, 2008). The 'co-inherence' of belief, values and practices appears both evident and influential in/for-profit SME enterprises in South Africa.

6.2.1.2   Research Question 1: Conclusion

This conclusion will answer Research Question 1: 'How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?' The answer to this question lies in the proposition that religious and secular paradigms should not be seen as mutually exclusive (Busentiz & Lichtenstein, 2019). This initial scholarly proposition is supported by this current study of women-owned SMEs in South Africa. In addition, Neubert (2019) asserts that one of the current limitations in the study of management sciences is failure to incorporate the metaphysical. The current study supports this assertion and is also an answer to the research question. At a granular level, it is evident (Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9) that there is rich description of the prominence of religious beliefs, values and practice in the respondents' personal and business lives and that these influences are co-inherent on their decisions. There is a uniform influence of religion on all respondents' lives and businesses, irrespective of their faith. Furthermore, there is no discernible pattern in the data that would suggest different religious influences by faith. The religious influences are the following: a) religious comradery by individuals, b) compassionate intention at the individual and enterprise levels and c) 'co-inherence' of religious beliefs, religious values and religious practice.

Notable variations between the literature and the data are as follows: a) in the study, spiritual comradery extended beyond Islam to other faiths, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism; b) the minimal evidence of religious values on the respondents'/women-owned enterprises' electronic business platforms was possibly due to a number of factors (namely the respondents' internal orientation in respect of their religious practice, the unconscious nature of religious values, the interconnectedness of religious and business

values, and the size and priorities of the enterprises); and c) 'co-inherence' was evident in for-profit enterprises.

6.2.2   Research Question 2

How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Research Proposition 2: The location decision is influenced by the coexistence of religious and economic influences.

6.2.2.1   Research Proposition 2: Discussion

Reuber et al. (2018) suggest that international entrepreneurship is the activity of seeking opportunity across country boundaries. This study is, therefore, appropriately nested in international entrepreneurship theory, since all the respondents engaged in cross-border opportunity seeking, regardless of their religious paradigm. This data is evident in Table 10 and Section 5.5. As can be seen in Table 10, the export of services to locations across country boundaries is both geographically a) proximal and b) distant from South Africa.

In addition, the current study sample mainly comprised micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as shown in Table 7. The research may be useful in understanding these types of enterprises, since Verbeke and Ciravegna (2018) postulate that international business scholars have historically focused on **large** organisations.

The Uppsala model of internationalisation (Vahlne & Johansen, 2019) and its relevance to this study will be discussed in Section 6.2.4. The influence of networks (an extension of the Uppsala model) in location choice will be discussed in Section 6.2.3.

6.2.2.1.1   Coexistence

Economic Influences

According to De Beule et al. (2018), the following are determinants of location decisions: market size, corruption, ease of doing business, costs, employment, education, population and population density. The current study supports this assertion by these scholars. With reference to Table 10 in Section 5.4, respondents of all faith paradigms

identified market size and market opportunities, costs, corruption and the education of the host country population as economic influences on their location decisions. It, therefore, follows that economic determinants influenced the location decisions of the respondents in this study.

In addition, in their systematic literature review on the location decisions of MNCs, (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020), scholars have developed a conceptual model to describe influencers in the location decision. These scholars suggest that a) institutional dimensions, b) the macro environment and c) industry-firm dimensions affect the location decision. The conceptual model in the literature (Figure 3) can be found in Section 2.5.

As is evident in Figure 4, the scholars assert a direct relationship between institutional dimensions and location choice. It is not possible for this assertion to be directly compared with the current study, since the current study is qualitative in nature, and the conceptual model was developed from a systematic review methodology, drawn from the medical sciences. The model asserts relationships and includes moderators and mediators; it is thus deemed quantitative (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020, p. 10).

The comparative analysis between the literature in Chapter 2 and the findings in Chapter 5, pertaining to the location decision, will include other literature and the current study findings (De Beule et al., 2018; Li, 2018). In addition to institutional dimensions, the moderators and mediators (namely the macro environment and industry-firm dimensions) will be discussed qualitatively. The conceptual model (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020, p. 10) is a useful comparative departure point.

The firm-industry dimension of previous work experience was found in the current study in respondents of the following faiths: Christian, Hindu with Christian affiliation, and Christian with ancestral affiliation, as seen in Table 10 (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020, p. 10). One of the respondents, who is of Christian faith with ancestral affiliation, confirmed the influence of previous work experience in a number of sub-Saharan countries as an influence on her decision to locate the enterprise activities in these locations.

A macro-environmental influence relating to the level of market development in the host country was present in the current study in one of the location decisions made by a Hindu respondent who has Christian affiliation; this can be seen in Table 10 in Section 5.4 (Donnelly & Manolova, 2020, p. 10). This respondent described location decisions to the

United Kingdom and Australia on the basis of the availability of sizeable engineering projects.

Li (2018) suggests that company resources are one of the main determinants of the internationalisation of multinational enterprises. There is support for this assertion in the current study, in that both a Muslim and Christian respondent identified costs as influencers in their location decisions. The Muslim respondent determined logistics costs as an important influence on internationalisation, and a Christian respondent mentioned advertising costs, in USD, as a constraint in her internationalisation decision to locate her business in the United States. This is evident in Table 10. Of interest is that the literature unit of analysis was a multinational enterprise, and the current research investigated micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Religious Influences

Religion is described as a cultural-cognitive institution (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; Scott, 1987). Additionally, in their model, Donnelly and Manolova (2020 p 10) assert the presence of institutional distance as having an effect on location choice. Cultural distance is deemed to be a societal difference in values (Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013; Beugelsdijk et al., 2018). The perceptions of religious similarity or differences can, therefore, be interpreted to be institutional (cultural and psychic) distances (Garcia-Muina et al., 2020; Magnani et al., 2018; Romero-Martinez et al., 2019; Safari & Chetty, 2019).

Although the construct of distance was not widely noted by respondents in this study, there is a subset of faiths for which institutional, cultural and psychic distance is material. These distances **do** seem to have an influence on the location choice in the current study, as is evident in Table 10, and are evident for Muslim and Jewish respondents but are perceived antithetically.

The Jewish respondents described location of internationalisation activity as being influenced by religious differences and religious historical context. This can be seen in Section 5.4. One of the respondents was unable to internationalise her consulting services to Saudi Arabia on the basis of her identification with Judaism. Another Jewish respondent experienced significant personal dissonance in her commercial property partnership in Poland because of the Holocaust.

The Muslim respondents described religious similarity as an influence in the location choice. This is noted in Section 5.4 and Table 10. One Muslim respondent described the decision to internationalise her jewellery to the United Kingdom to access a large Muslim community of potential customers. Another Muslim respondent described a larger Muslim community in Dubai and her religious values as an influence on the location decision in the export of her consulting services.

Li (2018) asserts that decision makers interpret and create meaning from their environment and that this cognition influences their internationalisation behaviour. This scholarly assertion appears to be supported in the current study and is evident in Table 10. Some respondents described religious meaning in their location decisions. The respondents were of Christian identity, with other religious affiliations; of Hindu identity, with affiliation to Christianity; and of Christian identity. Those who attributed religious meaning to their location decisions described a) a God-Almighty-given purpose, b) being guided by God Almighty, c) God Almighty's intervention and d) God Almighty's orchestration. None of the respondents described only religious influences on their location decision. In addition, a number of respondents of all faith paradigms did not mention religious meaning as an influence in their location decisions.

This is notable. The 'co-inherence' that was found in the daily personal and business lives of the respondents and their internationalisation decisions, discussed earlier in Chapter 6.2, was not as evident in the location decision (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019; Henley, 2017; Neubert, 2019; Tlaiss & McAdam, 2021). The respondents did not reflect a similar strength of 'co-inherence' in the location decision in internationalisation.

This evidence is supported by Richardson and Ariffin (2019), who have asserted that the religious influence on location decisions is present but indeterminate. This religious influence is the presence of Muslim communities and networks. These prior scholars' assertions are both supported and **not** supported by this study. The research affirms the influence of Muslim communities and networks. It does not concur with an undefined influence of religion on location decisions but, instead, notes a co-existent influence.

The explanation for the nuances described, namely less 'co-inherence' in the location decisions than decisions in general and less scholarly attention to religious influence in location decisions, may be contextual in respect of the latter. The research was conducted exclusively on South African enterprises, with a multi-faith cohort of women who owned enterprises.

Non-religious Networks

Torkelli et al. (2018) suggest that business networks are an important mediator in the relationship between institutional factors and internationalisation. The scholars further assert that network proficiency assists in the internationalisation of SMEs. The current study confirms this assertion.

As is evident in Section 5.4 and Table 10, all the respondents had internationalised their businesses. The determinants of the location decisions are also outlined in Table 10. The influence of networks in the internationalisation location decision was present in each faith paradigm, except in the cases of the Hindu respondent, one Muslim respondent and one Christian respondent.

Nyuur et al. (2018) explain the enabling influence that networks have in small businesses' identification of opportunities in foreign locations. This assertion is confirmed by the current study. As can be seen in Table 10, business networks influenced location decisions, particularly for respondents who are Christian with affiliations to other faith paradigms.

The unequal influence of a foreign firm-to-firm network (within the business network typology) in opportunity realisation, is posited by Liu et al. (2021). However, the influence of family, personal, professional and academic networks was evident in this study, as noted in Table 10 (Jiang et al., 2020). There was no evidence in the research of a significant firm-to-firm network.

Scholars indicate that identification with religious networks and the influence of religious networks substituted for a lack of formal institutional support from government (Onuklu, et al. 2021). The differences in findings with respect to the scarcity of influence of religious networks may be due to the fact that institutional voids, which are a construct of investigation in the scholarly article, were not studied in the current research.

In addition, scholars posit the influence of religion and spirituality in strengthening ties and networks in internationalisation (Kurt et al., 2020; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). Importantly, the results of the current study did not confirm the influence of religious networks on location decisions. As is evident in Table 10, there is no data suggesting the influence of religious networks on respondents' location decisions.

The scholarly studies were conducted in a predominantly Muslim context (Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). In the current study, no Muslim respondents (or respondents of other faith paradigms) mentioned the influence of a religious network in their location decisions. Consideration should be given to the differing contexts between the scholarly studies and current research.

Smith et al. (2019) postulate that entrepreneurs who have a shared religious belief system may benefit from resources that come from their religious network and that the religious obligations of honesty and fairness will lower their transaction costs. The findings discussed in Chapter 5.3 do not support either of these assertions. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there was no evidence of the influence of religious networks in the study. Therefore, the respondents did not describe harnessing resources from their religious networks. One exception may be a Jewish respondent, who described the choice of a home country and business partner (human resource) from her religious community on the basis of shared religious values.

A possible explanation for the absence of religious networks is the religiosity of the respondents. As mentioned in Chapter 2.3, intrinsic religiosity is the manner in which individuals incorporate their faiths into their lives (Bergin, 1980a; Chan et al., 2022). The respondents expressed a more private religious practice of personal prayer. This more private religious orientation may be a reason that religious networks and communities did not influence the location decisions of the respondents. Although there is mention in Table 9 of the extrinsic religiosity (Bergin, 1980a) of church, mosque, synagogue and temple, this religious orientation was found to be minimal in the respondents.

Notably, the respondents did not explicitly mention transaction costs. However, certain respondents laid out religious values-based criteria for choosing their business partners. As noted in Table 8, the espoused religious values of fairness and honesty were present in all faith paradigms in the study. Furthermore, the choice of business partners on the basis of values is mentioned in Table 12. The analysis in Section 6.1 has led to the assertion that religious, personal and business values may be co-inherent with each other. It follows, and it could be argued, that Respondent 4's answer of 'Walk[ing] away from deals where we realise the value system was not aligned…' is evidence of lower transaction costs.

This assertion is made on the basis that if the respondents value honesty, integrity and fairness as religious values, as evidenced in Table 9, then they will align with others who

value honesty, integrity and fairness. This will lower transaction costs due to improved exchange of information.

Valhne and Bhatti (2019) enrich the discussion about networks. The Uppsala model of internationalisation proposes that business relationships, networks and knowledge accumulation lead to increased participation in a particular market. This, in turn, leads to the incremental identification of opportunities and internationalisation in markets in close proximity to that country.

The current study appears to support the assertion that the Uppsala model does not comprehensively explain the internationalisation location decisions of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries (Reuber et al., 2018; Verbeke & Ciravegna, 2018). Evidence of this assertion is found in Table 10, which displays the location choices of the respondents. The interview instrument did not contain questions about sequential location decisions, but from a perusal of this table, it is clear that internationalisation to proximal markets is present but not omnipresent. This is interpreted to be an indication that the South African enterprises did not initially locate their internationalisation activities to proximal countries.

Furthermore, the informal nature of the opportunity identification and subsequent pattern of internationalisation activity would seem to support the above analysis. This will be discussed later.

6.2.2.2   Research Proposition 2: Conclusion

This conclusion will answer Research Question 2: 'How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?' The answer to the question lies in the assertion that the location decision is influenced by coexistent religious and economic influences. This scholarly assertion is affirmed by the current study (De Beule et al., 2018; Donnelly & Manolova, 2020; Li, 2018). However, the study revealed inconsistencies. The most salient economic influences on location decisions are a) previous work experience, b) level of market development and c) internal company resources. There is agreement between the literature and the findings on the most salient economic influences. In addition, the influence of religious values in lowering transaction costs in the location decision is posited in the research (Lo Turco & Maggioni, 2018).

Networks of different typologies **did** appear to influence the location decisions of respondents of all faith paradigms in the sample (Liu et al., 2021; Nyuur et al., 2018; Torkelli et al., 2018; Vahlne & Bhatti, 2019). The influence of business networks on location decisions appears to be more salient for those of Christian faith who have other affiliations. However, the influence of family, personal, professional and academic networks was evident across all faith paradigms. Finally, there does not appear to be evidence that networks influenced sequential internationalisation in the location decisions in this study (Vahlne & Bhatti, 2019).

Notably, in contrast to the literature, religious networks comprising similar belief systems, religious values and religious practice were **not** found to be an influence in the current study (Kurt et al. 2020; Onuklu et al. 2021; Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). The researcher posits four possible reasons for this incongruence. The first is that institutional voids were not a construct of study in the research (Onuklu, 2021). The second is that the religious orientation of the respondents was private and that the respondents' had relatively minimal engagement with formal religious institutions (Bergin, 1980 a). The third is that the presence of religious comradery, and respondent perceptions that religious belief systems are similar, decreases the relevance of a religious network per se (Richardson & Rammal, 2018). The fourth is that there are contextual differences pertaining to the location decision, in that the host country in the research was South Africa.

The influence of religious meaning in the location decision was present for those of the following faiths: Christian, Christian with other affiliations, and Hindu with Christian affiliation (Li, 2018). The religious influences on the location decision were found to be a) a God-Almighty-given purpose, b) being guided by God Almighty, c) God Almighty's intervention and d) God Almighty's orchestration. However, there is no evidence that the aforementioned religious influences are the sole influence on one's location decision.

The perceptions of similarities and differences, posited as institutional, cultural and psychic distances, were found to be relevant in the location decision (Barnard & Mamabolo, 2022; Beugelsdijk & Mudambi, 2013; Beugelsdijk et al., 2018; Scott, 1987). Although these distances were not consistently evident in this research pertaining to South Africa, the respondents of Muslim and Jewish faith perceived and experienced the distances disproportionately and antithetically.

The 'co-inherence' found in the daily personal and business lives of the respondents, discussed earlier in Chapter 6.2, was not as evident in the location decision (Busentiz &

Lichtenstein, 2019). In addition, in terms of internationalisation, there does not appear to be a similar strength of 'co-inherence' in the location decision. This is the rationale for the influential theme of coexistence in the location decision.

6.2.3   Research Question 3

How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Research Proposition 3: Religion influences the entry mode, entry commitment and pattern of internationalisation.

6.2.3.1   Research Proposition 3: Discussion

Legend:
High commitment: Greenfield investment
Moderate commitment: Acquisition and investment
Low commitment: Export of services and goods
Very low commitment: Project-based alliances
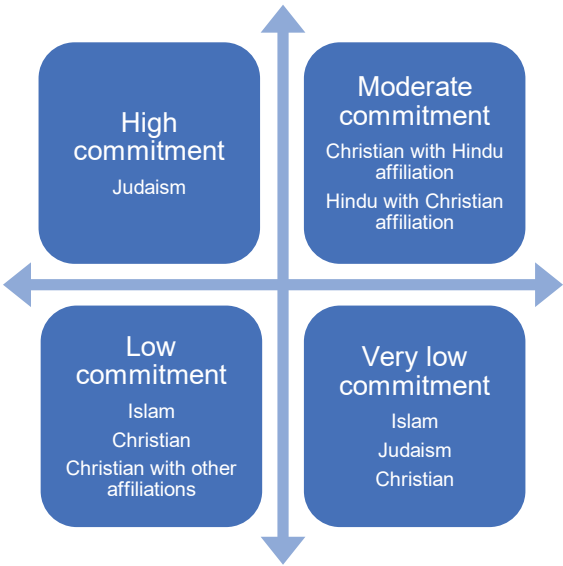
Figure 9

Commitment Level in Internationalisation, According to Religious Identification

Source: Author's own

6.2.3.1.1 Religious Influence on Low-Risk Commitment

Younis et al. (2022) suggest a low-risk entry mode in their study of the internationalisation of SMEs in developing countries. This is congruent with the Islamic tenet of low risk in business activities. Although the current study is multi-faith, the entry mode of export is prevalent in the study, as noted in Section 5.5 and Table 11. The prevalence of the export of **services** is also noted in the study. However, despite a prevalence of low-risk entry modes, an acquisition and greenfield investment were found to be modes of entry, as can be seen in Table 11.

Furthermore, Richardson and Ariffin (2019) suggest that religious affiliation does not increase commitment in mode of entry decisions. Scholars have found that the effect of Islamic managerial religiosity does not increase the level of commitment of entry mode into other Muslim countries (Younis et al., 2022).

In the current study, as is evident in Table 11, Table 12 and Figure 8, a religious affiliation to the host country was not widely evident. Although Muslim affiliation was present in the internationalisation decisions of two Muslim respondents, this did not appear to influence a high level of commitment. This is explained in Figure 10 above.

As mentioned in the previous section, Section 6.2.3, the comparison between the literature and findings must take into account the literature study sample demographics. The literature study sample is predominantly Muslim, and the current study sample is multi-faith.

6.2.3.1.2 Religious Influence on Business Type

The business models embraced in the current study are evident in the widespread informal and strategic alliances, partnerships, affiliate partnerships and project-based teams noted in Table 12. The religious influences on business models are informed by a) religious belief systems and b) religious values.

Religious influence on the basis of an adherence to a religious belief system is relevant to the export of consulting services. A Muslim respondent changed her business model in internationalisation. The model was changed from capital investment in residential property to consulting services, offered on a project basis. This change in business model was premised on the respondent's belief that the respondent's capital should be diverted to giving back to her religious community, as shown in Section 5.5.

The religious influence, on the basis of similar religious values, on a formal partnership in commercial property development is evident in Section 5.5. The similarity of religious values led to enhanced mutual understanding in a home country partnership in the case of one of the respondents. This mutual religious value system influenced the partnership business model by influencing the choice of partner.

6.2.3.1.3   God Almighty's Unsystematic Pattern

Recently, scholars have started questioning the Uppsala model, which posits an incremental internationalisation path (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018). These scholars posit that this model of incremental internationalisation is unable to explain new paths of internationalisation, different typologies of markets and different entities (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018). It can, therefore, be concluded that the Uppsala model of incremental internationalisation does not comprehensively explain strategic internationalisation decisions (Surdu et al., 2021). In addition, the concept of 'regional Muslim internationalisation' is posited by scholars (Younis et al., 2022). In respect of a regional internationalisation, no evidence was found in the current study to support this pattern of internationalisation. Indeed, there was no evidence of a pattern of internationalisation that was based on **any** type of regional religious affiliation.

As is evident in Figure 9 in Section 5.9, the findings of this study indicate an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation. This unsystematic pattern may be influenced by religious beliefs, as noted in Table 12. The religious influences in the study were a) religious orchestration, b) religious direction, c) religious provision, d) religious purpose and e) religious surrender. The interpreted influence of religious beliefs on an unsystematic pattern was present in all faith paradigms. This finding is notable, in that it could mean that the belief in a higher power is one of the influences that enables an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation.

The possible influence of religious beliefs on an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation is evident in this study. The religious beliefs already mentioned may have been influential, but the following religious beliefs are interpreted to have been most salient in the study: a) religious provision, b) religious surrender and c) religious orchestration. No literature can be found in respect of this above assertion from the study (identified in Section 5.9 and evident in Table 13).

This may be a new contribution. The following keywords were used to try identify literature in this regard: a) 'religious influence' and 'unsystematic pattern' and 'internationalisation' b) 'religion' and 'unsystematic pattern' and 'internationalisation' c) 'religious beliefs' and 'unsystematic pattern' and 'internationalisation' d) 'religious values' and 'unsystematic pattern' and 'internationalisation' and e) 'religious practice' and 'unsystematic pattern' and 'internationalisation'. Despite the best endeavours of the researcher, no literature was found.

6.2.3.1.4 God Almighty's Strategic Pattern

The prior assertions in respect of unsystematic internationalisation are, however, balanced by the findings that religious influence also informs strategic decisions by a) creation of new enterprises and internationalisation activities and b) religious purpose. It is posited by the researcher that the religious influence on a strategic pattern of internationalisation is somewhat less influential than the influence on unsystematic internationalisation. This may concur with a more structured internationalisation pattern found in the literature, namely both a regional and incremental pattern of internationalisation (Vahlne & Johanson, 2019; Younis et al., 2022)

6.2.3.2 Research Proposition 3: Conclusion

This conclusion will answer Research Question 3: 'How does religion influence the "how" decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?' Younis et al. (2022) suggest a low-risk entry mode in their study of the internationalisation of SMEs in developing countries. This is congruent with the Islamic tenet of low risk in business activities. Although the current study is multi-faith, export is a prevalent entry mode in the study, as seen in Section 5.5 and Table 11. The study, therefore, somewhat concurs with the literature.

Furthermore, in the current research, a religious affiliation to the host country was not widely evident. Although Muslim affiliation was present in the internationalisation decisions of two Muslim respondents, it did not appear to influence a high level of commitment. This is explained in Figure 10. As mentioned in the previous section, Section 6.2.3, the comparison between the literature and findings must consider the literature study sample demographics. The literature study sample was predominantly Muslim, and the current study sample is multi-faith.

The business types embraced in the current study are evident in the widespread informal and strategic alliances, partnerships, affiliate partnerships and project-based teams noted in Table 12. The religious influences on business types are informed by a) religious beliefs systems and b) religious values.

As is evident in Figure 9 in Section 5.9, the findings of this study indicate an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation. This unsystematic pattern is interpreted to be influenced by religious beliefs, as seen in Table 12. The religious influences are a) religious orchestration, b) religious direction, c) religious provision, d) religious purpose and e) religious surrender. The interpreted influence of religious beliefs on an unsystematic pattern is present in all faith paradigms. This finding is notable, in that it could mean that the belief in a higher power enables an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation.

Despite the best endeavours of the researcher, literature could not be found in respect of this above assertion. This may be a new contribution. The prior argument is, however, balanced by the data that religious influence also informs strategic decisions in that a) religion advocates for entrepreneurship, b) religion advocates for the creation of a business and c) religion determines strategy.

6.3   Conceptual Framework

The below conceptual framework supports the tentative proposition about religious influence on internationalisation decisions in respect of an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation. The theme identified from the findings about this is called 'God Almighty's unsystematic pattern'. The religious influences on an unsystematic pattern are interpreted to be a) religious orchestration, b) religious direction, c) religious provision, d) religious purpose and e) religious surrender. The following proposition could, therefore, be formulated: that the belief in a higher power is a religious influence that enables a less concerted pattern of internationalisation.
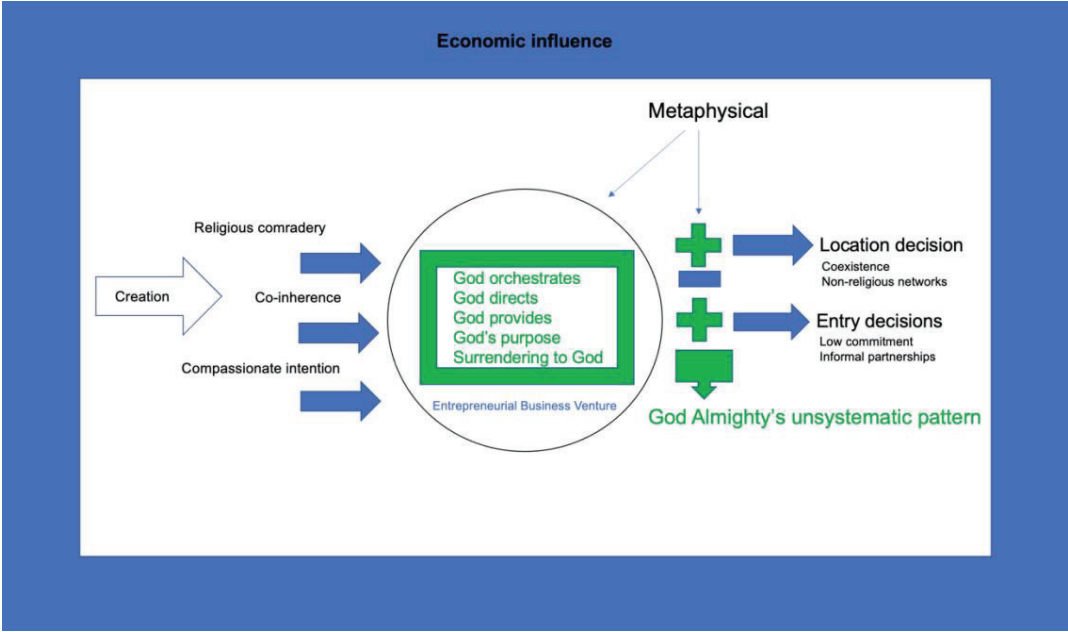
Figure 10

Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own

6.4 Conclusion

The utility of the comparative analysis and interpretation has informed the answers to the research questions. The comparative analysis referenced chapters 2 and 5. Chapter 7, which is the next chapter, will conclude this research work.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The research conclusions are discussed in Chapter 7. These conclusions are the culmination of a review of the scholarly work that was discussed in Chapter 2 and the research outcomes that were outlined in Chapter 6. This final chapter will posit a potential contribution and make a tentative claim in respect of the pattern of internationalisation. Additionally, the chapter will provide recommendations for business stakeholders, address the research limitations and offer recommendations for further research.

The conceptual framework developed from the research outcomes and the literature review is found below, in Figure 11. This framework suggests an answer to the research questions about the influence of religion on strategic internationalisation decisions in women-owned enterprises. The research questions are revisited at this juncture to assist in an understanding of the conceptual framework:

1. Research Question 1: How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?
2. Research Question 2: How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?
3. Research Question 3: How does religion influence the 'how' decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?
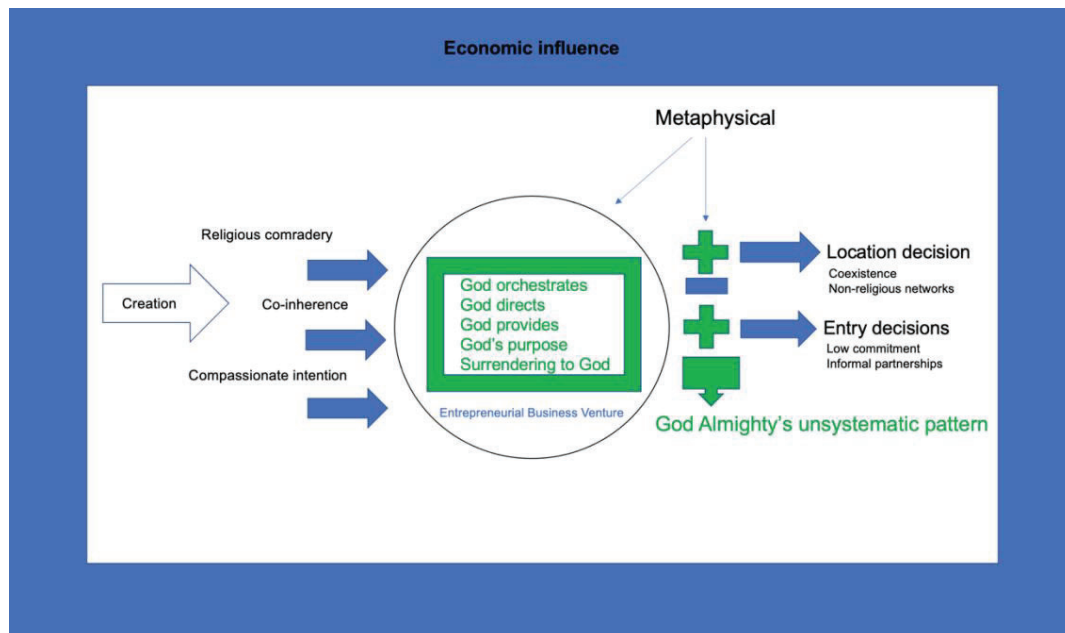
Figure 11

Conceptual Model to Explain How Religion as a Cultural-Cognitive Institution Influences

Strategic Internationalisation Decisions of Location and Entry Mode, Commitment and Pattern

Source: Author's own

7.2 Final Research Conclusions

The conclusions will be discussed in relation to the conceptual model above (Figure 11).

7.2.1 Religious Influence on the Enterprise

The initial conclusions of the research lie in the proposition that religious and secular paradigms should not be seen as mutually exclusive in material internationalisation decisions (Busentiz and Lichtenstein, 2019). This initial scholarly proposition is supported by the current study of women-owned enterprises in South Africa. In addition, the current study verified Neubert's (2019) assertion that a limitation in the study of management sciences is the omission of the metaphysical. The current study supports this academic proposition; in addition, the current study is a component of the answers to the research questions.

At a granular level, it is apparent in the current study that there is rich description of the prominence of religious beliefs, values and practice in the respondents' personal and

business lives. Furthermore, these influences were found to be manifest in their decisions.

There was a uniform influence of religion on all respondents' lives and businesses, irrespective of their faith. Furthermore, in the study, there was no discernible evidence to suggest different religious influences by faith. The religious influences were the following: a) religious comradery exhibited by individuals, b) a compassionate intention at the individual and enterprise levels and c) visibility of religious beliefs, religious values and religious practice in internationalisation decisions.

The spiritual comradery described by scholars as a mutual attraction between individuals on the basis of personal faith influenced the women in the research, at the individual level of analysis (Richardson & Rammal, 2018). It must be borne in mind that the sample comprised solo and micro entrepreneurs (but was not exclusively made up of them). The enterprise and individual levels of analysis were, therefore, somewhat indistinct. The attraction and religious comradery were founded on the perception that religious belief systems are similar. Notably, spiritual comradery appeared to extend beyond Islam to other faiths, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism.

At an enterprise level, a compassionate intention by the enterprise places a value on self-sacrifice (love for others) and fairness (House et al., 2002; Tliass & McAdam, 2021). The findings in the study support the assertion of these prior scholars, but espoused at an individual level. It must be borne in mind that the sample partly comprised solo and micro entrepreneurs. The enterprise and individual levels of analysis were, therefore, somewhat indistinct. The most common religious values held by the individual respondents were a) love for others and b) the ethical values of fairness and equality. Notably, there was minimal evidence of religious values on the enterprises' electronic business platforms. This may lead to the conclusion that compassionate intention is not present at the enterprise level. However, orientation in practice of faith may be an explanation because of the internal religiosity of the women in the study (Bergin,1980a).

'Co-inherence', which is discussed by Busentiz and Lichtenstein (2019), is posited as the principles of faith manifested in material contexts. The 'co-inherence' is visible in the motivation of the women in this study to found new enterprises and in their internationalisation activities. Their decision to initiate new internationalisation activity was based on a) God Almighty's purpose for the individual and, by extension, the

enterprise and/or b) God Almighty's provision of a business or internationalisation opportunity.

The 'co-inherence' in religious values is supported by the idea of the unconscious values that are held by individuals (Henley, 2017). The research found the influence of religious values on business to be as follows: a) placing a value on others who are created in God Almighty's image, b) undertaking an obligation of honesty towards others and c) demonstrating compassion for others. Karakas and Sarigollu (2019) suggest that the 'co-inherence' of religious practice leads to an obligation by enterprises to behave responsibly. This was found to be the case in the research outcomes – women who own enterprises feel compelled to behave according to higher standards, which have been set for them by their religious belief system. Notably, in the study, 'co-inherence' is evident in for-profit enterprises and not only in social enterprises.

Kavas et al. (2020) assert the inclusion of Islamic practice into enterprise decision making. The seeking of religious counsel through religious practice was found in the research by exception. The practice was noted in a founder and owner who identifies with Christianity. The owner meets with God, who is her CEO, on a monthly basis to review her business performance and seek counsel from God for the month ahead.

Busenitz and Lichtenstein (2019) opine that decision making cannot be fully explained by facts. As is evident in the conceptual model in Figure 11, the religious influence on internationalisation decisions is that a) God Almighty orchestrates, b) God Almighty directs, c) God Almighty provides, d) God Almighty has a purpose for one and e) one should surrender to God Almighty.

Neubert (2019) asserts that human beings are the sum of their material and immaterial natures. The conclusion of the current study supports this proposition, since the sample were women who had achieved significant academic qualifications in the sciences. They concomitantly held religious beliefs and values.

7.2.2   Coexistence of Economic and Religious Influence on the Location Decision

The location decision appears to be influenced by both religious and economic influences. Scholars posit economic influences on the location decisions (De Beule et al., 2018; Donnelly & Manolova, 2020). The research concludes that the most salient

economic influences on location decisions, for this study, are a) previous work experience in the host location, b) the level of market development of both the home and the host country, but with more emphasis on host country and c) internal company resources. However, the influence of religious values in lowering transaction costs in the location decision is posited.

Networks of different typologies appear to influence the location decision (Nyuur et al., 2018; Torkelli et al., 2018). The influence of business networks on location decisions appears to be more salient for those of Christian faith who have other affiliations. However, the influence of family, personal, professional and academic networks was evident across all faith paradigms. Finally, there does not appear to be evidence in the research that networks influence proximal, sequential internationalisation in the location decisions (Valhne & Bhatti, 2019).

Notably, in contrast to the literature, religious networks composed of those of similar belief systems, religious values and religious practice are not an influence in the current study. The geographical contextual relevance of the location decision (in other words, South Africa) may be one explanation. The geographical context in the literature is Turkey (Kurt et al., 2020; Onuklu et al., 2021). In addition, further explanatory support may lie in the private religious orientation of the respondents mentioned earlier (Bergin, 1980 a).

Li (2018) posits that decision makers interpret and create meaning from their environment. The influence of religious meaning in the location decision was present in this research for those of Christian faith as well as for Christians who have other affiliations and Hindus who have Christian affiliation. The religious influence on the location decision may be a) a God-Almighty-given purpose, b) being guided by God Almighty, c) God Almighty's intervention and d) God Almighty's orchestration. However, there is no evidence that the religious influence was the **sole** influence on the location decision.

The 'co-inherence' that was found in the enterprise decisions discussed earlier in Section 7.2.1 is not as evident in the location decision. There was not a similar strength of 'co-inherence' in the location decision in internationalisation (Busentiz & Lichtenstein, 2019). Therefore, the rationale for the influential theme of co-existence in the location decision is posited.

7.2.3 Religious Influence on Entry Mode, Entry Commitment and Pattern of Internationalisation

Younis et al. (2022) suggest a low-risk entry mode, congruent with the Islamic tenet of low risk in business activities, in their study of the internationalisation of SMEs in developing countries. Although the current study is multi-faith, it revealed export as being a prevalent mode of entry. However, despite the prevalence of low-risk entry modes, there was no evidence of a religious influence on this type of entry mode.

Furthermore, a religious affiliation to the host country was not widely evident (Richardson & Ariffin, 2019). Although Muslim affiliation was somewhat present in the internationalisation decisions of the sample, it did not appear to influence a high level of commitment. This is explained in Figure 10. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in Section 6.2.3, any conclusion in this regard must consider the literature study sample demographics. The literature study sample is predominantly Muslim, and the current study sample is multi-faith.

There were widespread informal and strategic alliances, partnerships, affiliate partnerships and project-based teams in the study. The religious influences on these informal engagements were informed by way of exception and are a) religious beliefs systems and b) religious values.

A conclusion with respect to the pattern of internationalisation is found in the recent scholarly questioning of the Uppsala model of proximal, incremental internationalisation (Gammeltoft & Cuervo-Cazurro, 2021; Schellenberg et al., 2018; Surdu et al., 2021). A conclusion with regard to the internationalisation pattern in **this** study indicates an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation. This unsystematic pattern is interpreted to be influenced by religious beliefs. The religious influences are a) religious orchestration, b) religious direction, c) religious provision, d) religious purpose and e) religious surrender, as evident in the conceptual framework posited in Figure 11. The interpreted influence of religious beliefs on an unsystematic pattern was present in all faith paradigms.

This finding is notable, in that it could be interpreted to mean that the belief in a higher power informs an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation. There is limited literature in respect of this assertion, and this may be a new contribution. The prior assertion is, however, balanced by the data that religious influence also informs strategic decisions.

This strategic pattern of internationalisation is found somewhat less than the unsystematic pattern in this study.

7.3 Research Contribution

The research contributes to the body of knowledge about religion as a cultural-cognitive institution by illustrating the salience of religious beliefs, values and practices to women-owned enterprises. Specifically, the research contributes by refining the understanding of the religious influence on internationalisation and internationalisation decisions in South Africa. The studies to date have investigated internationalisation decisions and religious influence in other jurisdictions, like Turkey and Malaysia. These home jurisdictions have been Islamic and multi-faith in religious identification. The study further refines knowledge about religious influence on specific internationalisation decisions of location and mode of entry. A potential contribution lies in the proposition that religious beliefs may be influential in an unsystematic pattern of internationalisation in women-owned enterprises. As mentioned in Section 7.3, no literature can be located, post keyword searches, that explicitly seeks to understand this nexus.

7.4 Recommendations for Managers

7.4.1 Recommendations for Organisations

Religious beliefs and values appear important to employees and should be harnessed to achieve an organisation's goals. The conclusions of the research, in respect of religious comradery, may be harnessed by managers to achieve these goals. A departure point may be enterprise religious education. The recommendation is to focus on belief system similarity, since, arguably, differences currently prevail in the societal religious narrative. In addition, managers are encouraged to acknowledge the influence of religious belief systems to provide women employees with comfort and resilience.

Certain organisations place a value on the communication of enterprise values. The incorporation of religious values into the business value system may serve enterprises. These corporate values are arguably in place to provide behavioural guidance to employees and organisations. The most salient religious values identified from the research are a) love for others and b) fairness. The incorporation of religious values may lead to businesses with a compassionate intention, which feel an obligation to others in

their ecosystem. This compassionate intention at organisational level is deemed of beneficial contribution to the business or entrepreneurial ecosystem.

7.4.2   Recommendations for Women-owned Enterprises

International women managers should be cognisant of implicit religious influence on their own decisions about entry mode, level of commitment at entry and type of business on entry. Women managers and entrepreneurs who engage in internationalisation would do well to understand the relevance of religion to other women of different faiths in their internationalisation endeavours. The secondary industries that support women-owned enterprises, including incubators and funders, would do well to appraise themselves of the possible salience of religion to their women stakeholders. This should enable an enriched understanding of the needs of their constituents and improve support. This could, in turn, improve the women-led enterprises' 128uccess.

7.4.3   Recommendations for International Business Stakeholders

International business managers are encouraged to understand the faith of their stakeholders in other jurisdictions. It would seem prudent to understand international stakeholders through the lens of their religion, given the evident influence of religion in the internationalisation of women-owned enterprises. This could have advantageous outcomes in the inevitable management of distances in internationalisation. Furthermore, women international managers should be cognisant of implicit religious influence on their own decisions about entry mode, level of commitment at entry and business models on entry, as mentioned previously.

7.5   Research Limitations

The research would benefit from additional interview data. The researcher was constrained by a) time and b) personal network. Other potential respondents are available for interview during a quiet time in the business year. The inclusion of **these** additional respondents will improve the quality of the research. The researcher is aware of the qualitative methodology and the inability to generalise the conclusions from this research outside of the research context. In addition, the research would benefit from including additional Hindu respondents.

A further limitation lies in the religiosity of the sample. The sample criteria and communications contained the phrase 'identify as religious'. 'Religious' was generally

understood to mean that the respondents held their beliefs, values and practices to be salient. The respondents all had strong orientations to their faith through their belief system, values and practices. This is somewhat limiting, since the sample did not include those who merely **identify** with a religion. The inclusion of additional interview data from those who believe or practise in a more general manner will enrich the research. This will provide an opportunity for further comparative analysis.

7.6   Recommendations for Further Research

There is considerable opportunity for further research. The following are considered most important:

1.   Investigation of the influence of religious belief systems on unsystematic patterns of internationalisation;
2.   Investigation of the influence of religious values and belief systems in business model choice for internationalisation; and
3.   Investigation of the influence of religion post the internationalisation of women-owned enterprises.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Literature Themes, Key Literature and the Interview Guide Questions

Key Themes	Key Literature	Interview Guide Questions
Religious influence on internationalisation through beliefs, values and practices	Barnard & Mamabolo (2022); Busenitz & Lichtenstein (2019); Henley (2017); House et al. (2002); Neubert (2019); Richardson & Ariffin (2019); Smith et al. (2021);	1. What is your religious belief system? 2. What are your religious values? 3. How do you practise your religion? 4. How does your religion influence your life? 5. What role does religion play in your business ventures?
Religious influence on location decision	Donnelly & Manolova (2020); Kavas et al. (2020); Li (2018); Richardson & Ariffin (2019)	6. How did you make the decision about where to internationalise your business? 7. Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?
Religious influence on entry mode, level of commitment and pattern of internationalisation	LoTurco & Maggioni (2018); Richardson & Ariffin (2019); Surdu et al. (2021); Younis et al. (2022)	8. How did you make the decision about how to internationalise? 9. Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?

Appendix B: Interview Guide

The role of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution on the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises

Research Question

How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

Introductory Questions

Could you briefly explain your personal and professional background?

Could you briefly explain your current role and the main purpose of your business?

With which religion do you identify?

Main Questions

1. What is your religious belief system?
2. What are your religious values?
3. How do you practise your religion?
4. How does your religion influence your life?
5. What role does religion play in your business ventures?
6. How did you make the decision about where to internationalise your business?
7. Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?
8. How did you make the decision about how to internationalise?
9. Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?
10. How did you decide on the timing of internationalisation?
11. Could you tell me more about your experience of this process?

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Interviews

I am conducting research on *The role of religion as a cultural-cognitive institution on the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises*. Our interview is expected to last one hour, and will help us understand, *How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?* **Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty**. By signing this letter, you are indicating that you have given permission for:

- The interview to be recorded;
- The recording to be transcribed by a third-party transcriber, who will be subject to a standard non-disclosure agreement;
- Verbatim quotations from the interview may be used in the report, provided they are not identified with your name or that of your organisation;
- The data to be used as part of a report that will be publicly available once the examination process has been completed; and
- All data to be reported and stored without identifiers.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name:

Email: Phone:

Research Supervisor name:

Email:

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Table of Codes, Categories and Themes by Research Question

Research Question 1: How does religion as a cultural-cognitive institution influence the strategic internationalisation decisions of women-owned enterprises?

Codes	Categories	Themes
islam followed other faiths	Belief System	Religious Comradery
believe only god can judge me		
islam focus on taking care of oneself		
identifies with >one religion		
belief system of tolerance		
belief system of kindness		
belief system of cleanliness (mind and body)		
monotheist		
belief in acts of charity and kindness		
belief in the practice of your religion		
religious discussion within the family informed thinking		
belief in the role that ancestors play in your life		
belief in god as a super power		
belief that Jesus Christ is an ancestor		
belief in the ancestors		
identifies as Ismaeli Muslim		
religion can be questioned		
Ismaeli community are entrepreneurial, ismaeli community takes care of its own		
muslim belief system of unity		
muslim belief system in the prophet		
recognition of other faiths		
the imam as a spiritual guide		
giving back through your time or money		
hierarchy of imporatnce of giving back in ismaeli muslim		
highest level of service is sharing knowledge		
highest level of service is sharing knowledge		
belief about life as a balance between good and bad		
belief about life as a balance between good and bad		
creation in God's image		
most religions teach morality		
you cannot see god		
creation in God's image		
similarity between religions		
religion is more than what we see		

practice >one faith simultaneously		
giving back to the profession		
faith is jewish		
belief system of honesty		
belief system of respect in business		
education's influence on belief system		
influence of parents on belief system		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
believes in one god		
understanding of god is incomplete		
after life		
creation in God's image		
identify as christian		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
after life		
helping and serving others, integration of religious value system into business		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back to the profession		
significance of goddess of education		
giving back to the profession		
giving back through your time or money		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
faith in Gods purpose for you, opportunistic due to faith		
god believes in me		
gods trust in me		
conversation with god, god teaching me		
inner belief is 'seen'		
recognition of other faiths		
god backs skills and timing		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back through your time or money		
similarity between religions		
islam followed other faiths		
believe only god can judge me		
islam focus on taking care of oneself		
identifies with >one religion		
belief system of tolerance		
belief system of kindness		
belief system of cleanliness (mind and body)		
monotheist		
belief in acts of charity and kindness		
belief in the practice of your religion		
religious discussion within the family informed thinking		

belief in the role that ancestors play in your life		
belief in god as a super power		
belief that Jesus Christ is an ancestor		
belief in the ancestors		
identifies as Ismaeli Muslim		
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Ismaeli community are entrepreneurial, ismaeli community takes care of its own		
muslim belief system of unity		
muslim belief system in the prophet		
recognition of other faiths		
the imam as a spiritual guide		
giving back through your time or money		
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highest level of service is sharing knowledge		
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belief about life as a balance between good and bad		
belief about life as a balance between good and bad		
creation in God's image		
most religions teach morality		
you cannot see god		
creation in God's image		
similiarity between religions		
religion is more than what we see		
practice >one faith simultaneously		
giving back to the profession		
faith is jewish		
belief system of honesty		
belief system of respect in business		
education's influence on belief system		
influence of parents on belief system		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
believes in one god		
understanding of god is incomplete		
after life		
creation in God's image		
identify as christian		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
after life		
helping and serving others, integration of religious value system into business		

	Religious Values	Compassionate intention
giving back through your time or money		
giving back to the profession		
significance of goddess of education		
giving back to the profession		
giving back through your time or money		
religious belief system is a relationship with god		
faith in Gods purpose for you, opportunistic due to faith		
god believes in me		
gods trust in me		
conversation with god, god teaching me		
inner belief is 'seen'		
recognition of other faiths		
god backs skills and timing		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back through your time or money		
similiarity between religions		
conversation with god, god teaching me		
inner belief is 'seen'		
recognition of other faiths		
god backs skills and timing		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back through your time or money		
similiarity between religions		
conversation with god, god teaching me		
inner belief is 'seen'		
recognition of other faiths		
god backs skills and timing		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back through your time or money		
similiarity between religions		
conversation with god, god teaching me		
inner belief is 'seen'		
recognition of other faiths		
god backs skills and timing		
giving back through your time or money		
giving back through your time or money		
	Religious Values	Compassionate intention
similiarity in religious values		
religious value of only Allah judges		
religious value of taking care of yourself		

religious value of giving to others and community		
religious value of 'do good'		
personal values of fairness and equality		
religious value of integrity		
religious values defined business and work		
religious values of mindfulness of others		
religious value of love for others		
religious value of selflessness		
rituals as a religious value		
studying as a personal value		
religious value of others are a reflection of yourself		
religious value of surrendering to god		
religious value of respecting elders		
church as a place to build value systems		
walk away from deals on basis of values		
values are informed by religion		
values come before numbers in a deal		
values in business		
values in choice of partners		
values of doing the right thing		
value system created opportunities		
religious value of respect		
religious values are like god		
value system informs business behaviour		
religious value of love		
religious value of seeing potential in others		
religious value of tolerance		
religious value of respect		
religious value of equality		
religious value of trusting God		
religious value of integrity		
religious value of honesty		
similarity in religious values		
religious value of only Allah judges		
religious value of taking care of yourself		
religious value of giving to others and community		
religious value of 'do good'		
personal values of fairness and equality		
religious values defined business and work		
religious values of mindfulness of others		
studying as a personal value		

religious value of others reflects yourself		
religious value of surrendering to god		
religious value of respecting elders		
church as a place to build value systems		
walk away from deals on basis of values		
values are informed by religion		
values come before numbers ina deal		
values in business		
values in choice of partners		
values of doing the right thing		
value system created opportunities		
religious values are like god		
value system informs business behaviour		
religious value of love		
religious value of seeing potential in others		
religious value of tolerance		
rituals as a religious value		
studying as a personal value		
religious value of equality		
religious value of surrendering to god		
religious value of respecting elders		
church as a place to build value systems		
walk away from deals on basis of values		
values are informed by religion		
values come before numbers in a deal		
values in business		
values in choice of partners		
values of doing the right thing		
value system created opportunities		
religious values are like god		
value system informs business behaviour		
religious value of love		
ethical sourcing in supply chain	Ethics	
ethics of islam		
values of integrity and ethical behaviour		
imporatance of ethics in internationalisation		
ethical belief system in business		
do business with ethical people only		
faith requires higher standards of behaviour in business		
ethics challenged constantly		
ethics means doing things differently		
ethics in day to day business		
ethical sourcing in supply chain		

ethics of islam		
values of integrity and ethical behaviour		
imporatance of ethics in internationalisation		
ethical belief system in business		
do business with ethical people only		
faith requires higher standards of behaviour in business		
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values of integrity and ethical behaviour		
imporatance of ethics in internationalisation		
ethical belief system in business		
do business with ethical people only		
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ethics challenged constantly		
ethics means doing things differently		
ethics in day to day business		
ethical sourcing in supply chain		
ethics of islam		
values of integrity and ethical behaviour		
imporatance of ethics in internationalisation		
ethical belief system in business		
do business with ethical people only		
faith requires higher standards of behaviour in business		
ethics challenged constantly		
ethics means doing things differently		
ethics in day to day business		
ethical sourcing in supply chain		
	God in daily life	Co-inherence
religion as a problem		
hand over worldly problems		
religion as a cultural practice		
fasting as religious practice		
practice of prayer continuously		

religion influences my daily life		
religion as a daily guide book		
religion as a guide in challenging moments		
challenge of adhering to religious values and belief in business ventures		
religion influences your way of being		
practice religion by keeping a kosher home		
practice religion by going to the synagogue		
practice religion through hospitality at home and in the organisation		
religious practice of observing the mourning period in judaism		
increasing religious knowledge through study		
prayer as a practice of faith that provides comfort		
practice spirituality by study in secular world		
religion influences behaviour in life		
practice faith by sharing religious knowledge		
purpose of religion is giving back		
religion as a practical application to life		
practical approach to the ritual of daily prayers		
personal belief in the practice of faith		
imam keeps religion relevant in modern times		
time as a means of giving back in the ismaeli community is imporatnt		
parents role model giving back in religious community		
friday prayers are social gatherings too		
daily incorporation of religious practice in life		
acknowledge god in daily life through prayer		
availability of prayer hall to practice prayer		
prayer as personal practice		
prayer as a ritual		
muslim practice of prayer is important		
muslim practice of prayer is important		
practical incorporation of prayer into daily life		
social cohesion of prayers in daily life		
religion affects every part of life		
incorporates certain religious teachings but not others		

faith as a means to derive gratitude		
development of religious experience and knowledge through free will		
faith as a means to derive gratitude		
the bible creates meaning		
religion constrains		
time with the creator		
religion as a guide		
challenge of adhering to religious practice		
religious music as practice		
practice by giving back to the church		
practice religion through learning		
practice of judaism with family		
practice of going to Church		
bible as authoritative text		
daily incorporation of religious practice in life		
practice of prayer continuously		
practice faith through reading the bible		
daily incorporation of religious practice in life		
faith as a means to derive gratitude		
Christianity as an everyday guide for action		
challenge of adhering to religious practice		
religion affects every part of life		
personal expectations of oneself in faith		
challenge of adhering to religious practice		
practice faith through reading the bible		
religion as a cultural practice		
prayer as a ritual		
religion as a guide		
strategic plan in creation of business		
importance of religion in society	Integration of religious and secular	
islam links with science		
integration of religious value system into business		
intra-personal contrast between faith practices and work in the secular world		
integration of faith into a secular life		
integration of faith, learning and socialising		
integration of faith into life		
faith as a guide on due diligence of others in business, utility of both faith and business tools to assess others in business		
inter-relationship of religious and personal values		

integration of faith into a secular life		
helping and serving others, integration of religious value system into business		
let go and let god	Religious influence on business ventures	
religion as human element in business		
application of belief system to business		
god is omnipresent		
honesty in business ventures		
tolerance in business ventures		
women live their religion at work		
family influence on choice of business		
religion informs the person who comes to the business venture		
Jewish view on leadership		
practice behaviour of the highest standards		
religion does not play a role in business ventures		
religion does not play a role in business ventures		
religious beliefs create boundaries in sangoma practice		
Ismaeli community are entrepreneurial, ismaeli community takes care of its own		
ismaeli muslim =capitalism with a social view		
business ventures for giving back to your religious community		
obligation of zakat (tithe)		
practice of religious values of fairness in business, religious practice of honesty in business ventures		
how religious you are influences role in of religion in your business		
integrity in business ventures		
islamic guidance to be an entrepreneur		
will do business with anyone		
religious tolerance in business dealings		
morality guides choice of who to do business with		
prayer in preparation for meetings		
faith as a motivator for gratitude in business ventures		
faith as a guide on due diligence of others in business, utility of both faith and business tools to assess others in business		
tithe from personal wealth and business ventures		

use of business tools in assessing others in business ventures		
new business is sent by God		
God as the motivator for creation of the international consulting		
religious obligation to know about other faiths in business		
venture not based on religious guidance		
God as a provider of business and provision		
God is all around us and so my business can be international		
god as provider of new business		
your actions havean impact on others now and in the future		
practice by using talents		
god is the reason for my success		
practice prayer in the office		
prayer before meetings		
using prayer as a mentorship tool		
religion plays a big role in business ventures		
god given purpose in business		
god providing business		
god providing business		
religious practice of wearing another's shoes in business		
god created us to be creative		
religious belief system as motivation to start business		
god is creative		
prayer before meetings		
tolerance in business ventures		
god is company ceo		
christianity provides peace in business ventures		
faith as comfort in business		
business of helping others		
faith as comfort in business		
God as a provider of business and provision		
religious value of responsibility to others		
god as Guide		
faith purpose over economic goals		
god given resilience		
faith as comfort in business		
god is watching fee structure		
tithe from personal wealth and business ventures		
importance of money in the bible		
relevance of money in christianity		
tithe from personal wealth and business ventures		
integrity in business ventures		
god given purpose in business		
faith as comfort in business		

faith purpose over economic goals		
integrity in business ventures		
god given purpose in business		
god as provider of new business		
god is omnipresent		

Research Question 2: How does religion influence the location decision in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Codes	Categories	Themes
religion as a guide about where to go	Location decision	Coexistence
religion as an obstacle to international work		
geographic location may affect amount of international work is accepted		
first timing was Africa		
cultural intelligence		
knowledge of host country is important, opportunities in less developed African countries influenced the location decision		
lived in location before as an influence on the location decision		
business networks as an influence on the location decision		
business experience in location influenced location decision		
economics as an influence on the location decision		
level of development of the industry is an influence in the location decision		
internationalised nearby in the location decision		
economic rationale for location decision		
personal motivation for location decision		
opportunity identification as a factor in the location decision		
culture as an influence in the location decision, religious values as an influence in the location decision		
culture as an influence in the location decision		
access to a larger and more robust religious community as an influence on the location decision		
prayer as a vehicle to location decision		
international network influenced location decision		
religious network in the where decision		

havent been there before for where decision		
customer psyche influences location decision		
psychology of the market in location decision		
moral differences superceded by economic rationale		
decision not to internationalise in Africa		
security concern about African internationalisation		
corruption an obstacle to African internationalisation		
corruption an obstacle to African internationalisation		
corruption an obstacle to African internationalisation		
invest in research before location decision		
opportunity identification as a factor in the location decision		
location decision based on language		
lived in location before as an influence on the location decision		
market size in location decision		
location decision based on earning dollars		
failure in the where decision		
strategy drove location decision		
place of work is not relevant	Home country factors	
local experience in location decision		
local market maturity determined timing		
learning in South Africa before internationalising		
hours of practice		
knowledge of host country is important, opportunities in less developed African countries influenced the location decision	Host country factors	
host political stability as an influence on the location decision		
host business networks have local country knowledge to assist the how decision, use of business networks to register company in host market		
host country regulatory environment requires understanding in the how decision		
host country environment is a factor in the internationalisation decisions		
host country industry dynamics are a factor in the location decision		
host country partner cultural differences		
skill set in host country influences location decision		
longstanding business network	Networks	

family networks in export		
academic networks influenced the where decision in internationalisation		
opportunities for internationalisation came from networks early in career		
multiplier effect of business network		
host business networks have local country knowledge to assist the how decision, use of business networks to register company in host market		
accessed expatriate community working in South Africa in the how decision		
personal network in the how decision		
academic network opened up business avenues		
personal network as source of international client		
non-religious personal connection		
professional network as a source of new international clients		
relationships from long ago in internationalisation		
international networks		
professional network as a source of new international clients		
business referrals are word of mouth		
personal network as source of international client, personal network in the how decision		
partnership from business network		
longstanding business network		

Research Question 3: How does religion influence the 'how' decisions in internationalisation of women-owned enterprises?

Codes	Categories	Themes
mistakes from disagreeing with 'universe'	Religious influence on decisions	Low risk commitment Informal partnerships Unsystematic pattern Strategic pattern
religion guides good decisions		
integration of science and religion to answer questions and find the truth		
understanding oneself early		
personal bias		
ancestors inform you of how to live your life, ancestors play a role in your life, ancestors provide you guidance, role of dreams in providing guidance on what to do		
integration of free will and faith to act		
choice is a human action		

integration of science and metaphysical		
integration of family and community with religion to make the decision		
God as a mentor in decision making		
religion is a touch stone		
mentor to pray about decisions		
transition in judaism and change management	The influence of religion on internationalisation	
religious identity may create potential for discrimination in the workplace		
religion does not play a role in any of the internationalisation decisions		
religious network for international philanthropy		
international clients of different faiths		
God guiding internationalisation decisions		
god's mercy creating internationalisation opportunities		
prayer today may result in internationalisation success in the future		
faith as a constraint in internationalisation		
faith influences cognition		
faith based international vision		
social media as a source of business	The how decision in internationalisation	
online platform for export		
export a mix of serendipity and business activity		
project based teams is the how of internationalisation		
business practices and ethics influence which customers to work with		
religious incompatibility, ethics and contract are influences on the customer (international) acquisition		
capacity restraints determine which international projects are taken up or not		
non-licensing method of entry		
specific skills for specific projects		
business network for entry mode		
world class expertise		
international experience		
failure in the how		
office required in host country to contribute to legitimacy in the how decision		
specific skills are required in country to assist with how decision		
low risk entry mode initially in the how decision		

challenges of being a small business in the how decision		
mimicry of previous how decision in new market		
strategic alliance as an entry mode in the how decision		
increased control of the venture led to more growth in the how decision		
personal networks in the how decision		
entity is a partnership		
use of knowledge and skills to add value in the how of internationalisation		
the how decision is influenced by the ismaeli doctrine of giving back		
informal team to enter the market: the how decision		
religious code influences the remuneration model in the how decision		
islamic and business influence on the remuneration in the how decision		
islam indicates equity partnership in the how decision when deploying capital		
business rationale for choice of partners in how decision		
choice of who to work with is not religious basis in the how decision		
integrity of others is the influence to work with them on the how decision		
mutual trust is a factor in choice of who to work with in the how decision		
spirit guiding the choice of who to do business with		
international legitimacy thorugh qualifications		
covid as an enabler for ease of international business		
individual as an international brand		
the bible as motivation for internationalisation		
investment guided by international presence of companies		
international experience as a platform for internationalisation		
chose partner on competence for entry		
financial value in choice of international partner		
importance of choice of host country partner		
religious affiliation in choice of home country business partner		
no religious affiliation with host country partner		

challenge of differences with host country partner		
religious ally in home country buffered challenge		
cultural differences intensify post entry		
right thesis for internationalisation		
social media as a source of business		
international legitimacy through business school affiliation		
client became business partner		
interpersonal chemistry with partner		
covid as an enabler for ease of international business		
variety and depth of offer necessary for further internationalisation		
growth of business constrained by cost of advertising in dollars		
affiliate selling in the how decision		
acquisition as mode of internationalising		
partnership to upskill young professionals		
informal team to enter the market:		
international experience		
god provides opportunities		
joint higher purpose		
led by clients		
project based teams is the how of internationalisation		
importance of host country teams		
localisation		
higher purpose mobilises		
strategic alliance as an entry mode in the how decision		
project team compilation		
client became business partner		
interpersonal chemistry with partner		
covid as an enabler for ease of international business		
international clients not actively sought	Strategic and opportunistic pattern	
internationalisation just happened		
international opportunity guides choice of work		
intentional in fund raising business		
internationalisation through being sought out		
planning the internationalisation		
strategic plan in location choice		
internationalisation is difficult		
non-linear process of internationalisation		
opportunistic process in location decision		
no strategy for internationalisation		

faith in Gods purpose for you, opportunistic due to faith		
opportunistic strategy		