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Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation: A Narrative Inquiry into Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the Urban Environment of the West Midlands

By

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis is submitted to fulfil the Doctor of Philosophy degree completion requirement at Birmingham City University's Birmingham City Business School in Birmingham, United Kingdom. I thus certify that the entire thesis is my work, except for quotations and citations that I have appropriately acknowledged. I also declare that this work, in its entirety or part, has never been submitted to any other colleges or institutions for any other purpose. I am liable for any errors or omissions in this thesis.

Tamaralaiyefa Harold Tiemo

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Your belief in me has been my greatest motivation, and I am forever grateful for your endless love and sacrifices.

Abstract

This research study explores the entrepreneurial activities of Black African immigrant entrepreneurs (BAIEs) concerning identifying opportunities and creating new ventures within the urban environment of the West Midlands. Research suggests that BAIEs in the United Kingdom (UK) have received comparatively less academic focus than other migrant groups. Previous studies categorised Black African and Caribbean migrant individuals as 'Afro-Caribbean.' Most Black African migrant research are conducted in densely populated areas of London. Furthermore, most research in this field prioritises quantitative data above entrepreneurs' subjective experiences, necessitating methodological diversity. As a result, this study employs phenomenology to explore individual experiences. It uses the conceptual framework of social identity, self-categorisation, diverse forms of capital, and institutional theory. Ten BAIEs from Sub-Saharan Africa were selected—four were first-generation, and six were second-generation migrants. All of them resided in Birmingham, a city in the West Midlands. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with these participants.

The key findings highlight that traits such as entrepreneurial passion, education, and previous work and industry experience are positive inclinations towards entrepreneurial activities fundamental to the identity of the BAIEs involved in this research. Social networks, comprising family, friends, professionals, suppliers, and customers, significantly impact the entrepreneurial process of BAIEs. Additionally, regulative, normative, and cognitive institutions influence the entrepreneurial process. These entrepreneurs mentioned facing limitations, connected to their identities as 'Black' and 'migrant,' which are frequently subject to discrimination and institutional marginalisation. At a cultural level, there is a restriction in business opportunities due to collective heritage and cultural economy. At a personal level, the ability to turn adversity into business opportunities positively affects tenacity and resiliency when confronted with exceptionally high barriers in the West Midlands urban environment.

Unlike studies that focus on a limiting ethnic dependence framework, such as the mixed embeddedness theory for migrant opportunities, this research advocates for a more nuanced understanding of the social and economic status of BAIEs. It underscores the significance of examining how social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional influences interact within complex and biased social frameworks.

Keywords: Migrant Entrepreneurship; African Entrepreneurship; Ethnic Minority; Opportunity Recognition; Venture Creation; Social Identity; Self Categorisation; United Kingdom

Table of Content

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Appendices

1 Chapter – Introduction and Overview of Study

1.1 Research Background

Entrepreneurship, a cornerstone of innovation and economic development, is deeply intertwined with the concept of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). It serves as a canvas where individuals can channel their creativity and determination, setting entrepreneurs apart from those who may lack these attributes. Traditionally, research in the entrepreneurship domain has placed a predominant focus on individual characteristics and behaviours displayed by entrepreneurs. However, a noteworthy change in basic assumptions has emerged, with a growing number of academics redirecting their attention towards the complex dynamics of opportunity recognition and the establishment of new ventures (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2015; George et al., 2016; Shepperson, 2018).

The groundbreaking study by Shane and Venkataraman in 2000 functioned as a catalyst, reinvigorating the field of opportunity research within entrepreneurship. This pivotal work has not only stimulated a nuanced understanding of opportunities but has also led to a distinct delineation of entrepreneurship within the broader social sciences, particularly concerning the recognition and understanding of opportunities (Corbett, 2005; Alvarez and Barney, 2013). The scholarly discourse sparked by Shane and Venkataraman has brought forth fundamental inquiries, probing the existence of opportunities for creating goods and services, the factors influencing individuals' capacity to discover and exploit these opportunities, and the diverse approaches employed in the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities.

These inquiries have, in turn, opened new avenues for research, particularly in the realm of migrant entrepreneurship. This evolving landscape has facilitated the emergence of novel insights into opportunity recognition and new venture creation. Moreover, there has been a growing emphasis on the significance of migrant entrepreneurship in policymaking, stakeholder engagement, and academic discourse (Ram et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2022; Solano et al., 2019, 2023). Understanding the complexities of migrant entrepreneurship has become increasingly vital, considering its role in shaping not only individual economic trajectories but also contributing to the broader economic landscape of the host country.

Opportunity-seeking behaviour is a hallmark of entrepreneurial success, characterised by the anticipation of achieving favourable entrepreneurial outcomes. However, this success determinant is contingent upon various social and environmental factors. Existing scholarly articles point to a notable trend among migrant entrepreneurs, who often direct their efforts towards industries yielding smaller profits, such as small-scale trading. This sector is recognised for its restricted opportunities for expansion or diversification (Edwards et al., 2016; Ram et al., 2017; Rath et al., 2020; Solano et al., 2023). Migrant individuals embarking on entrepreneurial journeys encounter a range of challenges, including limitations in infrastructure, networks, and access to credit when compared to their native counterparts (Rath and Swagerman, 2016; Solano et al., 2019).

Solano et al. (2023) posit that the landscape of migrant entrepreneurship is shaped by a complex interplay of structural and societal factors, imposing constraints on their participation in enterprises with high value-added potential. These limitations extend to various facets, including legal frameworks, governmental policies, and strategic initiatives. Divided into two categories, these factors encompass measures specifically tailored for migrants and migrant entrepreneurs, as well as those that indirectly influence this demographic. Despite these challenges, a recent report from the Open Political Economy Network (OPEN), a London-based think tank specialising in migration and diversity, sheds light on the substantial contribution of migrant enterprises to the United Kingdom (UK), estimated at a minimum of £74 billion annually (Minority Supplier Development UK (MSDUK), 2022).

The Entrepreneurs' Network (2021) underscores the resilience and success of migrant entrepreneurs, revealing that 49% of the UK's one hundred most rapidly expanding startups have at least one co-founder classified as a migrant. Additionally, data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) indicates that approximately 12% of migrants who are foreign-born engage in self-employment within these regions (OECD, 2018; Taddei and Solano, 2020; Solano et al., 2023). Koh's (2016) findings provide further insights into the impact of migrant entrepreneurs, revealing a considerable proportion of the leading Fortune 500 companies in 2017 were established or co-founded by individuals from the first or second generation of migrants. This not only highlights the economic contributions of migrants but also underscores their role in shaping the corporate landscape.

Migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs contribute significantly to both the economies of their host countries and the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector in their countries of origin (Chrysostom, 2014; Stoyanov et al., 2018b; Hajro et al., 2018; Opute et al., 2020). Despite the undeniable significance of these contributions, the challenges arising from super-diversity and

systemic constraints faced by migrant entrepreneurs are often overlooked by policymakers in the UK, as well as the public and the broader business community (Terjesen et al., 2016; Kaperová et al., 2022). Recognising and addressing these challenges is crucial not only for promoting inclusivity but also for unlocking the full potential of migrant entrepreneurship in the UK.

The absence of a delineated strategy to bolster entrepreneurial initiatives within the migrant community and other marginalised or disadvantaged communities hinders the ability of migrant entrepreneurs to actualise their entire capabilities. It is imperative for this plan to also consider potential disadvantages faced by confident entrepreneurs based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, disability, and social identity (Kaperová et al., 2022). To attain inclusive growth, the UK must implement an enterprise plan that promotes inclusivity. Implementing a comprehensive strategy is imperative to articulate clear objectives and delineate specific activities, thereby ensuring equitable access for individuals across diverse social strata to initiate and effectively administer successful entrepreneurial ventures. Dr. Eva Kašperová, a research fellow at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME), has urged the UK government and local authorities to establish specific objectives for inclusive entrepreneurship:

"The current lack of an explicit UK-wide policy on inclusive entrepreneurship could mean that some parts of the country will lag in terms of tackling structural inequalities and enabling entrepreneurs from ethnic minority communities and other under-represented or disadvantaged groups to access finance, wider markets and quality business support" (Kašperová et al., 2022: 9).

To support migrant businesses, there are long-term programs that offer comprehensive support packages (Kašperová et al., 2022). However, Black business owners have extreme opinions about unfair and unequal treatment, which causes a lack of trust and looks at the heart of rising levels of discouragement, with ramifications for the whole UK economy (Kašperová et al., 2022). The Diversity in Business Statistics reported that Black ethnics face social exclusion and discrimination throughout their entrepreneurial process, restriction to the broader mainstream market and limited access to finance, business support and other resources necessary for entrepreneurial success (Andrews, 2023). In a 2021 study of aspiring and current Black company owners, 53% of participants said they had experienced racism or discrimination, and 84% thought it might hinder their motivations for success (Black Business Network/ Lloyds Bank, 2021).

A 2020 survey found that 39% of aspiring Black entrepreneurs gave up on developing their business idea due to financial difficulties. This was also true for 42% of aspiring Asian and other ethnic minority entrepreneurs, 40% of aspiring Other White entrepreneurs, and 25% of aspiring White

British entrepreneurs (Black Business Network/ Lloyds Bank, 2021). The UK Diversity in Business Statistics shows that one out of every five Black business owners stopped operations due to challenges with access to capital. Compared to White businesses, Black businesses were four times more likely to be denied a business loan outright; however, this was primarily due to company credit issues rather than racism or discrimination (Andrews, 2023). Despite structural and systemic gaps, evidence suggests that Black African immigrants are more than five times more likely to be involved in autonomous business start-ups than their white domestic counterparts (Nwankwo et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, other researchers in the field of entrepreneurship amongst Black African and minority business owners in the UK have continued to confirm an array of limitations, challenges, and demotivational influences that are continuing to inhibit growth amongst private sector participants (Hack-Polay et al., 2020), for example, recently confirmed that immigrant entrepreneurs in Lincolnshire are at risk for various growth inhibitors, including ethnocentrism, stereotypes, cultural gaps, and language barriers. Mekonnen (2018) further confirmed that Black African immigrant entrepreneurs (BAIEs) from South Yorkshire are confronted with the effects of othering or distancing, restricting their business development practices to ethnic niche markets and small, transient consumer populations. Nwankwo (2005) confirms that several London-based BAIEs have engaged in entrepreneurship to escape ethnic penalties and socio-economic disadvantages; these lingering stereotypes have predisposed these aspiring business owners to the replication of traditionalism and institutionalised boundaries.

Despite such generalisations and regional evidence, the pathway to successful entrepreneurship varies. Knatko et al. (2016) posited that it will evolve out of selective determinations made by individuals aspiring towards a personal or professional objective. For this reason, in environments and socio-economic systems that encourage entrepreneurship, the proposition of a revised, adaptive, and strategic development arc is realistic and integrative. Where Hack-Polay et al. (2020) confirmed that embeddedness is the primary source of entrepreneurial potential in the UK, the current study has undertaken to critically assess the role and influence of various resources, opportunities, and advantages afforded by the West Midlands to BAIEs as they seek to circumvent the developmentally lagging pathways of their collective history and migrant experience.

1.2 Problem Orientation and Research Focus

The current research topic was carefully chosen because the author of this research study was concerned about starting and running a sustainable business in the UK. This motive became apparent in 2017 after he earned a master's degree in management and international business from Birmingham

City University (BCU). As an International Student from Nigeria, he was concerned about dealing with the unknown if he were to start his own business in the West Midlands through a Startup Visa route. Following discussions with family members who were first- and second-generation migrants to the UK from Nigeria, the author realised that various stages of business development are different for BAIEs. From the recognition of the need to the vision formation to the initiation of the enterprise, there is a complication in the entrepreneurial process of these individuals that stems from a lack of knowledge, mistrust of domestic institutions, and general uncertainty regarding the efficacy of their entrepreneurial endeavours. The author recognised the need to study how BAIEs identify opportunities and turn them into new business ventures.

The study underwent multiple revisions before focusing on the inquiry mentioned above to explore the entrepreneurial activities of BAIEs concerning opportunity recognition and new venture creation. The research began with a pilot study to explore the contributory factors for success among BAIEs operating within the urban environment of the West Midlands. A critical examination of the pilot study and literature on entrepreneurial success revealed the need to refocus the research study (See Appendix A). Yousaf et al. (2014) and Tehseen et al. (2023) acknowledge that small business owners underline motivational factors that are financial and non-financial, often providing intrinsic rewards such as self-actualisation, satisfaction, and community support to validate the performative success of the business endeavour. Despite such self-defined measures, when assessing the factors contributing to entrepreneurial success, Ojo (2021) argues that the definition of success is inherently subjective and, as a result, is likely to evolve according to the BAIEs' needs, priorities, and achievements. While some entrepreneurs may be content to create job opportunities that increase their work-life balance or meet their basic financial needs, others may define success based on prior models, attempting to improve their status, or standing in society beyond that of their parents through business ownership (Ojo, 2021). Researchers can compare individual perceptions across large-scale samples or industry studies to effectively measure success. However, when benchmarked against sociocultural forces and group-based similarities, the underlying constructs of success become a critical extension of the social identification and self-categorisation of the entrepreneur (Pan et al., 2019; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021).

The focus of the research was refined and consolidated to centre on an exploratory study of BAIEs, emphasising their ability to identify opportunities and establish new ventures within an urban environment. By incorporating the concept of success, the core research questions and objectives were refined to focus on participants' perceptions concerning their business successes in the West Midlands. These prompts evolved to incorporate the idea of success in terms of individual experiences on the opportunity recognition and new venture creation among these entrepreneurs. By

focusing on the affective influence of perceptual forces on self-determined success, the orientation of this empirical study design emphasises the importance of narrative reflection and storytelling. Accordingly, where prior research (Nwankwo, 2005; Ekwulugo, 2006; Ojo, 2021) has drawn upon shared experiences and localised definitions of challenge and opportunity to frame the core questions and central research problem, this study approaches these queries from the perspective of BAIEs in the West Midlands.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

The primary motivation for undertaking this study stems from the lack of a thorough exploration into the phenomenon of opportunity recognition and new venture creation, explicitly focusing on BAIEs in the UK. Compared to other observable ethnic minority groups in the UK, there has been a limited amount of research on Black Africans' social and economic activities (Nwankwo, 2005; Nwankwo et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2012; Ojo, 2019, 2021). Nonetheless, the research conducted by Jones et al. (2012) and Nwankwo et al. (2011) indicates that a considerable number of BAIEs encounter failure because of diverse economic and socio-cultural factors. However, Baycan-Levent et al. (2012) and Ojo (2018, 2021) argue that the emerging diaspora of Black African immigrant generations actively engages in innovative business activities, specifically within information technology and creative industries. This active involvement has resulted in an enhancement of their entrepreneurial quality.

Previous research on migrant entrepreneurship has frequently categorised individuals of Black African and Caribbean descent as a unified social group, often called 'Afro-Caribbean.' It is essential to acknowledge that these ethnic groups exhibit significant variations in historical migration patterns, educational achievements, and entrepreneurial tendencies (Nwankwo, 2005; Domboka, 2013). The understanding of entrepreneurial activities among individuals of Black African immigrants residing in the UK is further complicated by the categorisation of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. Moreover, scholarly inquiries about individuals of Black African heritage have concentrated on London's densely populated metropolitan regions. The current trend observed in these studies indicates a requirement for increased methodological diversity. This trend leads to an excessive focus on quantitative data while neglecting to acknowledge the importance of documenting the subjective experiences of these entrepreneurs (Nwankwo et al., 2011; Domboka, 2013).

The rationale for undertaking this present exploratory study is apparent. The influence of policymakers on the trajectories of migrant entrepreneurs is of utmost importance, as they play a crucial role in assisting these individuals in overcoming barriers and realising their full potential

(Jones et al., 2022; Solano et al., 2019, 2023). However, it is worth noting that laws, policies, and practices can pose challenges and create additional obstacles for migrant entrepreneurs (Ambrosini, 2013; Solano and Huddleston, 2020). To provide financial and business support to members of the migrant community, policymakers in both the private and public sectors must understand market dynamics while also recognising the diversity among migrant groups, such as Black Africans and Black Caribbeans. Policymakers must refrain from viewing these distinct migrant groups as a homogenous category. This research addresses the areas mentioned above of limited understanding by giving a narrative account of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the West Midlands.

1.3.1 Research Aim, Questions, and Objectives

This research study aims to explore the complexities of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the urban setting of the West Midlands. The study provides a narrative insight into the experiences of these entrepreneurs as they initiate and grow their businesses. The research is guided by four key questions:

1. How do BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands identify opportunities and translate them into new business ventures?
2. What motivates BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands to transform opportunities into new business ventures?
3. How do BAIEs establish their entrepreneurial objectives within the urban landscape of the West Midlands?
4. In what ways does the institutional structure of the West Midlands influence the processes of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs?

The research objectives are designed to effectively address these questions.

- To understand the phenomena of migrant entrepreneurship and opportunity seeking, with a specific emphasis on the challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands.
- To explore the individual experiences of BAIEs within the urban environment of the West Midlands, with a particular focus on the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation.

Furthermore, specific research objectives are crafted to respond to the fourth question.

- To describe how the institutional structure of the West Midlands impacts the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs.
- To identify implications for both theory development and practical applications in the context of Black African entrepreneurship in the urban landscape of the West Midlands.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research study seeks to provide a narrative account of the entrepreneurial process of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context. The recruitment process for this study specifically focused on individuals residing in Birmingham City, an urban area in the West Midlands region.

This study focuses on BAIEs from Sub-Saharan Africa who have either immigrated (first generation) or were born in the UK (second generation) and have sustained their business operations for a minimum of one year. According to Jiang et al. (2021), the former refers to foreign business owners who aim to enhance economic activity by exploring novel products, processes, or markets. On the other hand, Pruthi and Tasavori (2022) define the latter as individuals born in the host country of residence or who arrived in the host country with their parents before the age of twelve and are the children or grandchildren of first-generation migrants. This research study employs the terms 'ethnic minority,' 'migrant,' and 'immigrant' interchangeably, as observed in previous studies (Volery, 2007; Ram et al., 2017; Pruthi and Tasavori, 2022). However, it is acknowledged in this thesis that the term 'ethnic minority' encompasses all first- and second-generation migrants in the UK with an ethnic minority background, including Black Africans, irrespective of their arrival date or birthplace (Blackburn and Smallbone, 2015; Ram et al., 2017).

This study used the conceptual frameworks of social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), self-categorisation (Turner et al., 1987), forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Becker, 1964; Portes, 1998), and institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The unit of analysis centred on the individual and collective experiences of BAIEs, prioritising their perspectives over other stakeholders. As emphasised by scholars such as Sefiani (2013) and Giacomin (2023), the entrepreneur is widely recognised as a crucial stakeholder in establishing and managing enterprises. This recognition is also evident in the literature on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship, as reflected in studies by Nwankwo et al. (2011) and Ojo (2021).

1.5 Research Significance

This research focuses on Birmingham, strategically aligned with the visionary goals of the West Midlands, a region dedicated to promoting inclusive and sustainable growth (Birmingham City Council, 2022). Serving as the primary administrative hub, Birmingham plays a pivotal role in local economic activities and employment, with its population surpassing one million, strategically positioned to contribute significantly to the region's economic progress (Birmingham City Council, 2011i; Tshuma, 2020). By proposing policy interventions aimed at addressing legal obstacles and enhancing access to resources and new markets for BAIEs, the research aligns with recommendations for inclusive and sustainable growth, aiming to enhance BAIEs' productivity in both the economy and society, thereby contributing to regional development. This research not only explores entrepreneurial experiences but also complexly connects them with broader regional goals and aspirations, adding substantial depth to the existing literature.

In the ever-evolving landscape of entrepreneurship, shaped by global influences like the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, the definition of entrepreneurship remains elusive, prompting ongoing debates and discussions (Gartner, 1990; Jones et al., 2011). This study actively engages with these debates, aspiring to contribute to the development of a comprehensive theoretical framework. By homing in on BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment, the research delves into the entrepreneurial process within a context heavily influenced by significant immigration trends over the past three decades (Office of the National Statistics (ONS), 2021). Birmingham, being a focal point for the surge in Black African immigrants, presents a unique lens through which to understand entrepreneurial dynamics. Systemic challenges faced by BAIEs extend beyond institutional and cultural prejudices, impacting assimilation and hindering professional growth. This study aims to illuminate these challenges, dismantling stereotypes and assumptions while recognising the latent entrepreneurial potential within the Black African immigrant community.

The West Midlands region, particularly Birmingham, has experienced a substantial rise in the Black African immigrant population, driven by educational and economic opportunities (Birmingham City Council, 2011i; Domboka, 2013). This research not only acknowledges this phenomenon but delves into the systemic disadvantages faced by BAIEs. The focus on Birmingham provides a distinctive lens, offering insights into entrepreneurial dynamics within a diverse urban environment, making a valuable contribution to the broader literature on immigrant entrepreneurship. Moreover, the study actively challenges stereotypes that often lead Black African immigrants toward insufficient income-generating occupations, recognising and celebrating their entrepreneurial potential and abilities. By examining the experiences of both first and second-generation BAIEs, the research fills a

critical gap in existing studies, which concentrate on first-generation migrant entrepreneurs. Chapter 4, exploring historical, demographic, and economic contexts, adds significant depth to our understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands. This research is poised to provide valuable insights for policymakers, support organisations, and the BAIE community, contributing to the cultivation of a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region.

1.6 Thesis Structure and Organisation

The research study is methodically structured and meticulously organised into eight discrete chapters, with each chapter serving a specific purpose within the overall scope of the study. The chapters of this study encompass various aspects, beginning with this current chapter, which is the introduction and overview of the study. Following this, a critical evaluation of the theories that form the foundation of migrant entrepreneurship is presented. The subsequent chapter focuses specifically on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship in the UK. The research context is then established, providing a framework for the study. The methodology employed in the research is outlined in the subsequent chapter. The results and findings derived from the study are presented in a separate chapter, followed by a discussion of these findings. Finally, the study concludes with a chapter that draws overall conclusions and highlights the contribution to knowledge, research limitations, and implications of the study. Below, a concise summary of each of the chapters is provided.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of Study

This chapter provides contextual information regarding the research study. Moreover, it underscores the research problem and concentrates on the study scope, the research significance, and the thesis structure and organisation.

Chapter 2: A Critical Appraisal of Theories Underpinning Migrant Entrepreneurship

This chapter employs a narrative review process to analyse and evaluate the current information and academic literature on entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, and migrant entrepreneurship. This chapter explores a range of theories that serve as the theoretical foundation for migrant entrepreneurs in the UK. Theoretical topics covered in the discussion include cultural and structural theories, middleman minority theory, interactive model, and mixed embeddedness theory. Although these theories form the basis of migrant entrepreneurship, they do not fully account for all the issues impacting BAIEs who operate in the UK's urban setting since they place so much emphasis on ethnic

enclaves. The present research study highlights that the social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional influence of these entrepreneurs shape the identification and pursuit of opportunities in the urban context of the UK. These concepts are further discussed as a conceptual framework in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom

This chapter seeks to enhance the narrative review process by examining the current corpus of knowledge and scholarly literature about the challenges and opportunities encountered by BAIEs in the UK. Additionally, this chapter endeavours to construct a conceptual framework for the ongoing research study. This chapter acknowledges that pursuing entrepreneurial objectives by individuals of Black African immigrants has significant socio-cultural implications, such as limitations imposed by prevailing structures, dependence on cultural norms, and hindrance to overall development. The present study employed the conceptual frameworks of social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional theory, which were subjected to comprehensive scrutiny in this chapter to establish their suitability for the research study. The rationale for the adoption of these theories is that BAIEs face inherent disadvantages due to their marginalised status and are further constrained by their inability to disassociate themselves from their cultural heritage, which is both rich and restrictive.

Chapter 4: Research Context

This chapter discussed the West Midlands region of the UK in connection with the evolution of the research methodology in Chapter 5. Deakins and Freel (2012) found that regional entrepreneurship studies are valuable because they shed light on local environmental factors contributing to developing entrepreneurial traits derived from culture, religion, generation, and social class. Scholars have posited that regional opportunity structures can influence entrepreneurial activity and success and stimulate entrepreneurial drive. The research conducted by Ram (1993) provided empirical evidence supporting the influence of geographical variation on entrepreneurial activity. This research revealed significant disparities in entrepreneurial activity within various ethnic minority groups in the UK. The observed disparities can be attributed to variations enabling factors contingent upon the geographical location. These facilitating factors determine the accessibility of investment opportunities and improved infrastructure. Additionally, this chapter summarises the regional challenges specific to Black African immigrants in the West Midlands.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological factors that were considered during this dissertation's design. This chapter explains the epistemological, ontological, and philosophical viewpoints that serve as the foundation for this research project. Previous studies on migrant entrepreneurship seem to have relied only on quantitative data, which fails to capture migrant entrepreneurs' voices and individual experiences. This study used a phenomenological and narrative inquiry within qualitative research, which allowed for capturing individual and collective experiences (Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017). Six second-generation migrants and four first-generation migrants from Birmingham, West Midlands, were recruited via purposive sampling and snowballing technique. Participants were all immigrants from Sub-Saharan African origin. Online semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data, which was analysed using thematic analysis, with elements of the King and Horrocks (2010), Guest et al. (2012), and Merriam (2015) techniques applied to the systematised analysis of the responses. The QSR NVivo software aided in the analysis.

Chapter 6: Results and Findings

This chapter presents the results and findings obtained from exploring BAIEs' entrepreneurial activities concerning identifying opportunities and establishing new ventures in the urban environment of the West Midlands. The chapter entails an analysis of the participants' generational, demographic, and business backgrounds, as well as their individual experiences. The resultant findings of the research study are encapsulated within five fundamental themes, all of which exhibit a robust correlation with the study's objectives. These themes include: (i) An overview of the participants' profile; (ii) The process of business idea generation and new venture creation; (iii) Factors influencing startup motivations; (iv) The pursuit of entrepreneurial goals; and (v) Supplementary Findings.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter sheds light on several inherent and systemic difficulties that have hampered the developmental trajectory of BAIEs. To accurately narrate the entrepreneurial activities of these tenacious and driven entrepreneurs in the West Midlands region, efforts were made to accurately depict their viewpoints and individual experiences. This chapter reveals essential discoveries from Chapter 6, which are selected and organised into four broad topics and comparatively discussed with the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of migrant entrepreneurship examined in the literature review (Chapters 2 and 3) and research context (Chapter 4). The topics discussed in this chapter

include: (i) Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation; (ii) Motivations to Initiate a Business Venture; and (iii) Entrepreneurial Objectives and Goal Realisation.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

This chapter concludes this thesis and offers recommendations to practitioners and policymakers. The chapter presents the research conclusion, contribution to knowledge, research limitations, implications for practitioners, policymakers, and future research.

2 Chapter – A Critical Appraisal of Theories Underpinning Migrant Entrepreneurship

2.1 Introduction

The research surrounding migrant entrepreneurship is growing, with many researchers pursuing evidence related to the unpredictable nature of migratory economics. From opportunity effects to integration barriers, the pathway determinism which filters migratory arcs is increasingly complex and socio-culturally and systemically discriminatory. Traditional research on entrepreneurial activity has framed its core theories around trait-based considerations and individual impact forces, with the relationship between vision and opportunity centred around the individual. For migrant entrepreneurs, however, the theoretical evolution of this field is distanced from this individually centred field of thought. Instead, the opportunity effects are often linked to complex phenomena of mixed embeddedness and cultural enclaves. These socio-cultural forces, coupled with individual traits and capabilities, make assessing the entrepreneurial activities of migrant entrepreneurs a complex combination of sociological, cultural, psychological, and systemic theories. The following sections will navigate the prior literature in this field, comparing theoretical discourse with empirical evidence to underscore the dearth of research on migrant entrepreneurship in the UK.

2.2 Definition of the Concepts of Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, and Enterprise

The term ‘entrepreneur’ is believed to have its roots in the French word ‘entreprendre,’ as discussed by Smith (1778), Peneder (2009), and Jonsson (2017). According to Smith (1778), ‘entre’ means ‘between,’ and ‘prendre’ means ‘to take.’ While various English terms have historically been used to describe entrepreneurs, like ‘adventurer’ and ‘undertaker,’ the latter term has undergone different interpretations. In historical contexts, ‘adventurer’ referred to those engaging in risky endeavours to achieve their goals (Plat, 1594; Smith, 1661). Conversely, ‘undertaker,’ as outlined by Smith (1778), denoted individuals assuming risk in transactions between buyers and sellers or undertaking tasks such as starting a new business. In the fifteenth century, Hennequin (1595) noted that ‘undertaker’ referred to independent contractors managing projects like building contracts, bridges, or city pavements. Throughout the sixteenth century, the term ‘undertaker’ underwent more consistent usage, with consensus among academics like Parker (1642), Potter (1650), and Violet (1653) that undertakers were those taking risks, responding to incentives, starting new businesses,

innovating, and occasionally engaging in rent-seeking. These activities are now commonly associated with the modern understanding of entrepreneurs.

When Adam Smith wrote 'Wealth of Nations' in 1776, the term 'undertaker' was well-established (Smith, 1776). When the book was translated into French, 'undertaker' was rendered as 'entrepreneur.' For instance, Smith stated, "the profits of the undertaker of the work who hazards his stock in this adventure" (Smith, 1776: 57). The French version of this sentence reads as "les profits de l'entrepreneur qui a risqué ses fonds à cet employ" (Smith, 1778: 128). In the 1800s, J.S Mill proposed in one of his articles that the term 'entrepreneur' be universally adopted to describe individuals who start businesses or head enterprises (Hoselitz, 1991; Jonsson, 2017), and the word has since been widely accepted by scholars and individuals worldwide.

Entrepreneurship, as explored by Croci (2016), is a diverse and multidisciplinary concept that resists a singular definition. Different researchers view it in several ways– some define it as the process of building a successful organisation, while others see it as the cultivation of a specific mindset and skill set. Barot (2015) suggests that entrepreneurship involves taking action to form a new organisation, asserting that adopting an innovative approach is crucial for success in establishing a new business. Nambisan (2016) highlights the influence of digital technology on entrepreneurship, stating that it shapes opportunities and removes ambiguity from entrepreneurial processes. Bonny et al. (2015) argue that entrepreneurship demands skills and talent due to innovation and market understanding. Managing entrepreneurship, according to Barot (2015), requires acknowledging the risk of starting a business and navigating the uncertainties and volatility associated with running a business and generating profit.

Notably, diverse definitions of entrepreneurship exist, as documented by researchers like Bruyat and Julian (2001), Bacq and Jansen (2011), Jinjiang et al. (2020), Hessels and Naudé (2019), and Prince et al. (2021). Additionally, scholars such as Howorth et al. (2005) have explored how diversity impacts entrepreneurship, underlining the varied perspectives within this field. While Low (2001) has lamented the amount of attention given to the concept of entrepreneurship, other researchers, including Shane (2012), Baker and Welter (2017), Welter et al. (2017), and Prince et al. (2021), have urged for ongoing discussion as a method of improving the subject. Shane stated:

"[. . .] the field has taken a problematic approach to dealing with this unresolved definitional debate. Instead of hashing it out, the field has largely adopted [our definition,] [...] if the field is to advance, we need to do a better job of deciding on our definition of entrepreneurship" (Shane, 2012: 13).

According to Prince et al. (2021), a clear definition of entrepreneurship makes it easier to study the topic under consideration by making it apparent what issues must be addressed and what behaviours, procedures, and outcomes must be researched. Consequently, several definitional themes relevant to entrepreneurship have been presented in Table 2-1 below to develop a definition for this current research study.

Definitional theme	Definition	Author(s)	Year
Uncertainty	*To bear risk in the reselling of agricultural and manufactured produce*	Cantillon	1734
	Organization and management of a business undertaking and assuming the risk for the sake of profit	Hull, Bosley and Udell	1980
	The attempt to predict and act upon change within markets	Knight	1921
	Activities necessary to create or carry on an enterprise where not all markets are well established or clearly defined and/or which relevant parts of the production function are not completely known	Leibenstein	1968
	The process by which individuals – either on their own or inside organizations – pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control	Stevenson and Jarillo	1990
Business Creation	*Major ownership and management of a business venture without employment elsewhere*	Brockhaus	1980
	The creation of new enterprise	Low and MacMillan	1988
	The creation of new organizations	Gartner	1988
	New entry	Lumpkin and Dess	1996
Innovation	*Innovative change within markets through the carrying out of new combinations*	Schumpeter	1934
Opportunity	*Recognizing and acting upon market opportunities*	Kirzner	1979
	The discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities	Shane and Venkataraman	2000
Value Creation	*A dialogic between individual and new value creation, within an ongoing process and within an environment that has specific characteristics*	Bruyat and Julian	2001
	Creating shared value for others	Lackéus Lundqvist and Williams Middleton	2016

Table 2-1: Prominent Definitions of Entrepreneurship by Definitional Theme (Source: Prince et al., 2021: 33)

While it may be impractical to use only one of the above-mentioned definitional themes, research endeavours must propose a definition that establishes a comprehensive and coherent theoretical framework, thereby enhancing the understanding of entrepreneurship (Jones et al., 2011; Prince et al., 2021). Hence, when we combine the definitional themes to present a comprehensive definition of entrepreneurship, we can conclude that it emphasises the importance of knowledge and skill as the core entrepreneurial capacity and is closely tied to opportunity recognition (Hessels and Naudé, 2019; Prince et al., 2021). The entrepreneurial knowledge and skill would then provide

innovation to the market (Hessels and Naudé, 2019), and finally, business management that encourages risk-taking and innovation will ensure sustainable economic development (Chen et al., 2018).

The overarching objective of this study is not solely to delineate an impeccable definition of entrepreneurship but rather to adopt and apply definitions that align with prevailing and widely accepted usage within the specific context of migrant entrepreneurship. As posited by Bruyat and Julien (2001), a definition is not an isolated entity; rather, it functions as a conceptual framework that addresses the research concerns of the scientific community within a given context. In this vein, the definitions below have been incorporated into the present research study, considering historical and philosophical rationales that underpin the concepts:

> **Entrepreneur:** Individuals who strive to establish or expand economic activities by identifying and leveraging new markets, goods, or services (OECD, 2018).
>
> **Entrepreneurship:** The driving force behind economic progress, providing critical innovation to capitalise on new opportunities, enhance productivity, generate jobs, and address societal challenges, such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (GEM, 2022).
>
> **Enterprise:** Any legal entity regularly engaged in economic activity, encompassing various forms such as self-employed individuals, family businesses, partnerships, and organisations (The Commission of the European Communities, 2003).

Moreover, Prenaj and Ismajli (2018) propose that the legal framework plays a crucial role in determining the efficacy and sustainability of SME policies. Establishing a unified framework becomes imperative to ensure equal opportunities for all SMEs, irrespective of their geographical location, enabling them to compete on a level playing field within the market. The European Commission (2015b) further categorises enterprises based on size, classifying them as micro, small, or medium-sized. Table 2-2 outlines the key elements, including annual work units, annual turnover, and annual balance sheet total, to consider when categorising an enterprise. This nuanced understanding of enterprises and their classifications within the legal and economic framework provides a comprehensive foundation for the exploration of migrant entrepreneurship within a structured and inclusive context.

Enterprise category	Headcount: Annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover, EUR	Annual balance sheet total, EUR
Medium enterprise	< 250	≤ 50 million	≤ 43 million
Small enterprise	< 50	≤ 10 million	≤ 10 million
Micro enterprise	≤ 10	≤ 2 million	≤ 2 million

Table 2-2: Enterprise Categories based on European Union Standards (Source: European Commission, 2005; cited in Prenaj and Ismajli, 2018: 64)

According to the EU, the most significant criterion in determining the category of an enterprise is its total number of employees (Prenaj and Ismajli, 2018). Nonetheless, numerous studies have identified several factors that influence the creation of a new enterprise. Beynon et al. (2020), for instance, explored entrepreneurial intentions regarding perceived opportunities and capabilities. Jiang and Tornikoski (2019) investigated the role of perceived uncertainty in entrepreneurial intentions. Laouiti et al. (2022) examined the influence of personality traits on entrepreneurial intentions. Kier and McMullen (2018, 2020) and Packard and Burnham (2021) explored the impact of entrepreneurial imaginativeness and empathy, Gielnik et al. (2015) studied entrepreneurial passion, Chen et al. (2020) examined the entrepreneurial environment, while Mason and Brown (2014) and Wurth et al. (2021) focused on the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Additionally, Von Briel et al. (2018) investigated the influence of digitalisation on new venture creation, among other factors.

Other scholars and academics argue that establishing new ventures is complexly connected to opportunity recognition, utilisation (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Eckhardt and Shane, 2003), and realising entrepreneurial prospects (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2016). As identified by Reynolds et al. (2002) and Bhola et al. (2006) in their respective studies, the aforementioned factors may be categorised into ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. Nevertheless, the usage of the terms push and pull factors in the context of decision-making factors in enterprise creation has significantly declined following the influential study conducted by Reynolds et al. (2002). The concepts of opportunity (pull) and necessity (push) entrepreneurs have been introduced as substitutes for these terms (Baptista et al., 2014; Giacomin, 2023; Emami et al., 2023).

While Vivarelli (2004) contends that opportunity entrepreneurs outnumber necessity entrepreneurs, he acknowledges the significance of necessity entrepreneurs. According to Reynolds et al. (2002), necessity entrepreneurs are younger (35 – 44 years old) than opportunity entrepreneurs (18 – 24 years old). Robichaud et al. (2006), on the other hand, argue that youths are associated with opportunity entrepreneurship. Other academics and researchers have reached similar conclusions

(Wagner, 2005; Bhola et al., 2006; Block and Sandner, 2009). However, Bergmann and Sternberg (2007) contend that age does not affect the likelihood of an individual creating an enterprise out of necessity. Wagner (2005) contend that having entrepreneurial parents makes you more likely to be an entrepreneur by choice rather than necessity. According to Robichaud et al. (2006), when opposed to necessity entrepreneurs, opportunity entrepreneurs are more focused on using an entrepreneurial network and have higher levels of education. Bergmann and Sternberg (2007) emphasise that only opportunity entrepreneurs are affected by the educational level.

According to Block and Wagner (2006) and Robichaud et al. (2006), unemployment is typical among necessity entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Wagner's (2005) research shows that unemployment has a favourable impact on the development of necessity and opportunity enterprises. However, the impact is more significant for necessity entrepreneurs. These findings have thus produced contradictory conclusions. According to Block and Sandner (2009), these research studies do not demonstrate any apparent disparities between these two categories of entrepreneurs. They contend that the socioeconomic characteristics of the entrepreneur influence his/her entrepreneurial dynamics. Many studies on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship have analysed entrepreneurs, both opportunity entrepreneurs and necessity entrepreneurs, in terms of their socioeconomic characteristics (Nwankwo, 2005; Ekwulugo, 2006; Domboka, 2013; Ojo, 2021).

2.3 Entrepreneurship from a Socio-Behavioural Perspective

Scholars and writers who have made significant contributions to the field of entrepreneurship, such as Cantillon (1755), Say (1803), Schumpeter (1949), and Gartner (1988), have put forth various approaches for understanding entrepreneurial activities. The various approaches can be categorised into three primary frameworks: economic, psychological, and socio-behavioural, which are centred around the interpretation of entrepreneurial goals. In this study, a socio-behavioural perspective was considered a valuable approach for examining the experiences of migrant entrepreneurs within their host society.

The socio-behavioural theory is an extension of the economic analysis of entrepreneurship. According to Camerer and Ho (2014), socio-behavioural economics improves economic models' explanatory power by offering more realistic psychological foundations of the entrepreneur. It suggests that an entrepreneur is essential to the complicated business formation process. He/she is more than a collection of personality traits, as opposed to an economic function (Ben Fatma and Ben Mohammed, 2020). The economic theory posits that entrepreneurial behaviour is driven by profit-making, creativity, and ownership. However, Bruyat and Jullien (2001) argue that an entrepreneur is

not merely an automated entity that mechanically reacts to external cues. However, although some psychological traits have a favourable correlation with business success, it is difficult to explain how they are passed into entrepreneurial behaviour due to a person's cultural background and life circumstances (Gartner, 1988; Duchesneau and Gartner, 1990; Baum, 1995; Drucker, 1998; Sun et al., 2020).

Consequently, this is addressed by the socio-behavioural theory, which analyses the entrepreneur beyond his/her psychological traits. Socio-behavioural economics examines the influence of interpersonal networks, organisational structure, population, field-level processes, and the larger institutional environment (Ruef and Lounsbury, 2007). According to Ben-Fatma and Ben-Mohammed (2020), socio-behavioural economics examines the impact of psychological, cognitive, and emotional biases on various markets and institutions. It balances the symbolic and cultural aspects of being an entrepreneur and the material aspects of starting a business, such as market conditions and financing (Ruef and Lounsbury, 2007).

The literature has highlighted the potential of entrepreneurship as a means of economic advantage for disadvantaged individuals or as a tool for addressing discrimination and enhancing social inclusion (Boyd, 2012; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). This present research study aims to understand the socioeconomic determinants that impact the identification of opportunities and establishment of new enterprises by immigrant entrepreneurs in an urban community within the UK. A socio-behavioural economics framework leads to a thorough understanding of BAIEs' socioeconomic and entrepreneurial context within a diverse, multicultural environment in the West Midlands area of the UK. According to Welter's (2011) perspective, it is crucial to understand the individuals who engage in entrepreneurship and the factors that influence their involvement, including the timing, manner, and rationale behind their participation. The subsequent section of this study delves into the overarching notion of a 'migrant entrepreneur' to understand its definition, connotations, and application within the context of this research.

2.4 Migrant Entrepreneur

There is some overlap in the literature relating to the term 'migrant' and 'ethnic minority' entrepreneurship. While several studies, including Kloosterman and Rath (2003), Nwankwo (2005), and Ojo (2021) have used the terms 'ethnic minority' and 'migrant' interchangeably, Blackburn and Smallbone (2015) and subsequent studies such as Ram et al. (2017) and Daniel et al. (2019) acknowledge that the term 'ethnic minority' is an inclusive of all individuals (first and second generation migrants) of ethnic minority heritage in the UK regardless of the date of arrival or place of

birth. The researcher of this study recognises these borders; nonetheless, it should be noted that the terms ‘ethnic,’ ‘ethnic minority,’ and ‘immigrant’ are used interchangeably in this current study. However, when referring to a specific migrant generation, controlled measures were used (e.g. first-generation or second-generation).

In a recent study, Davidavicciene and Lolat (2016) highlighted the issue of conceptual ambiguity in terminologies that may appear similar but possess distinct meanings within contemporary scientific research on migrant entrepreneurship. Additional interconnected terminologies have been incorporated into scholarly discourse, including the designations of ‘refugees’ and ‘asylum seekers,’ which are subcategories falling under the broader classification of ‘migrants.’ Each category possesses distinct legal statuses and entails diverse implications for an individual’s capacity to engage in employment and sustain their presence within a host country (Sepulveda et al., 2008). The terminologies in question would benefit from enhanced conceptual clarity due to prevalent misunderstandings and confusion observed in media and public discourse (House of Commons Library, 2017).

Previous research has indicated that the news media portray refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants as a “threatening homogeneous collective” (Innes, 2010: 461). Metaphorical language, such as the use of terms like ‘waves’ or ‘floods,’ is commonly utilised to depict a substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers that the host country is expected to accommodate (Esses et al., 2013; Parker, 2015; Cooper et al., 2021). The perception of refugees as a potential threat has been documented in multiple publications within the British print media, regardless of the newspaper’s political stance (KhosraviNik, 2010; Cooper et al., 2021). Prior scholarly investigations have explained the presence of disparities in the depiction of migrants and asylum seekers within diverse national media platforms. A pertinent example can be observed in the research undertaken by Phillips and Hardy (1997) regarding the news media landscape in the UK. The researchers’ investigation unveiled that the news content distinguished between individuals seeking asylum, categorising them as either ‘bogus’ or ‘legitimate.’ Parker (2015) conducted a study revealing that the representation of asylum seekers in newspapers from the UK and Australia displayed comparable trends. These patterns encompassed the characterisation of asylum seekers as unwelcome invaders, labelling them as dishonest and depicting them as individuals posing a threat. Nevertheless, a discernible differentiation surfaced in how the UK news media presented the matter, as they espoused the notion of expelling migrants. Simultaneously, Australian newspapers prioritised efforts to impede their admittance.

The way the news media constructs the narrative surrounding individuals who relocate to a foreign nation is frequently interwoven with the language employed. However, despite their various meanings and definitions, journalists frequently use the phrases refugee, asylum seeker, immigrant, and migrant interchangeably (Philo et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2021). Individuals who have applied for asylum and are awaiting a decision from governmental institutions regarding their legal status are called asylum seekers (Stevens, 2004; Cooper et al., 2021). Refugees are people who have been forcibly displaced from their home country and are unable to return due to persecution based on race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, social affiliation, or political affiliation (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016; Cooper et al., 2021). An immigrant is someone who moves to another country for personal, economic, or political reasons (Hatton, 2005; Cooper et al., 2021). This study focuses on those who have moved, regardless of whether they are legally classified as a migrant, refugees, or asylum seeker. Individuals of foreign origin who engage in business ownership to produce economic activity by finding innovative goods, processes, or markets are referred to as 'immigrant entrepreneurs' in this study (OECD, 2011; Wishart, 2018; Jiang et al., 2021). Furthermore, the terms 'first-generation migrant,' 'second-generation migrant,' and 'new migrant' are defined in this study as follows:

> **First-Generation Migrant:** Individuals of foreign origin who relocated to the UK via diverse migration channels, such as asylum seeker, refugee, or work visa. This generation represents the pioneers of migration, bringing with them diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences as they navigate the complexities of establishing themselves in a new country (Ojo, 2021; Pruthi and Tasavori, 2022).
>
> **Second-Generation Migrant:** Encompass the children or grandchildren of first-generation migrants. This includes individuals born in the UK to migrant parents, as well as those who moved to the UK with their parents before the age of twelve. As this generation emerges within the cultural milieu of the UK, their experiences reflect a unique blend of their familial heritage and the British environment, shaping their identity and perspectives (Rusinovic, 2008; Pruthi and Tasavori, 2022).
>
> **New Migrant:** Individuals who migrated to the UK during the period spanning from 1990 to the present. This group represents a more recent wave of migration, and their experiences are influenced by the evolving socio-economic and political landscape of the UK. The challenges and opportunities faced by new migrants contribute to the ongoing narrative of migration dynamics in the contemporary context (Domboka, 2013; Ojo, 2021).

2.4.1 Migrant Generational Effects and Entrepreneurial Transcendence

Although migrants engage in entrepreneurship as a means of opportunity-seeking or self-directed economic solidarity, there is a distinction between first and second-generation entrepreneurs in developed nations. Baycan et al. (2012), for example, recognise that many first-generation entrepreneurs have adopted an attitude of risk avoidance, relying upon local or cultural connections to guide their pathway into small business ownership. The second generation of migrant entrepreneurs, however, is experienced in new, innovative technologies, has acquired improved educational advantages, and is willing to 'break out towards entirely new and modern markets' through startup orientation and investment (Baycan et al., 2012: 973). Although this expectation is not universal, comparatively, there is a generational divide in the entrepreneurial modality that is directly affected by the individual's dependency upon the local community, their educational attainment, and their work experience in various sectors (Baycan et al., 2012). While there is an expectation of progressive socio-economic improvement across generations, there are also modernisation and opportunity effects that have provided additional advantages for modern innovation-seekers, thereby rewarding risk-taking behaviour as migrants redefine their long-term startup objectives.

One of the core challenges confronting any migrant entrepreneur is education, a condition exacerbated in highly competitive, developed urban markets by various domestic pressures. In a cross-cultural assessment of first and second-generation migrant entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, Beckers and Blumberg (2013) observed central industry-based similarities that markedly diversified between generations. The findings indicated that although first-generation entrepreneurs pursued a specific industry (e.g. hospitality, trade, business services), migration into higher-skilled, education-dependent pathways reduced the likelihood of their second-generation children following the same pathway. However, because these second-generation founders were more likely to adopt formal approaches to recruiting and startup formations, the developmental arcs were delayed or narrowed to maintain human resource efficiency compared to their first-generation counterparts (Beckers and Blumberg, 2013). Despite additional education, other domestic experience, and more extensive availability of resources, the findings failed to confirm that the second generation of migrants was more successful than the first. The evidence often suggested that the opposite was true (Beckers and Blumberg, 2013).

Historically, the niche-based, enclave-supported transition from outside migrant to the internal economic agent has mirrored familial or cultural patterns, resulting in cross-cultural similarities across migrant populations from similar nations. Despite such dependency, Ekwulugo (2006) posits that the agility of these small-scale enterprises, which includes a low employee base and limited product or

service line, allows these entrepreneurs to respond rapidly to changing competitive and market forces. The consequence of conformity at the onset of entrepreneurial orientation, however, is that migrants are more likely to default to traditional enterprises, avoiding the difficulties associated with new industries or innovative product solutions as they reduce their entry costs and the barriers to business creation (Ekwulugo, 2006; Ojo et al., 2013). Cooper (2021: 405) defines this affectation as an extension of "habitus" or a "set of fairly stable dispositions people internalise through socialisation," shaping normative value systems influenced by economic, social, and cultural forces. Second-generation migrant entrepreneurs who align their habitus with family history are more likely to exhibit similar entrepreneurial practices. However, when compared to the broader, diverse habitus of the urban landscape, Cooper (2021) notes disadvantages for these in-group-dependent individuals. They face pressures of survivalism, potentially hindering innovation, and opportunity-seeking.

Ojo (2018) highlights that second-generation mobility is influenced by the diaspora of leading migrant populations. This involves the transmission of knowledge and experiences, as well as the sharing of resources and domestic connections among their children and extended family members, contributing to a rich socio-political discourse. Despite a similar migrant heritage, Ojo (2019: 183) argues that the second-generation migrant group is "unique in some ways", combining "significant knowledge, skills, and experience" with the familiarity associated with ancestral nurturing to shape their entrepreneurial identities and agendas. As a result of systemic integration and longer-term residency than their first-generation parents, second-generation populations are also likely to exploit tacit knowledge to evolve their opportunities to develop and sustain relationships that extend beyond the constraints and limitations of their socio-cultural heritage (Ojo, 2019).

The distinction in entrepreneurial characteristics across first and second-generation migrants is based upon key considerations, including the mode of entry, the previous experience, and the pressures or expectations shaping economic pursuits. Kourtit et al. (2013: 31), for example, observe that where first-generation migrants are viewed as "forced entrepreneurs," second-generation migrants have been afforded the luxury of "voluntary entrepreneurs" with life and local experiences reshaping the pathway to startup framing. Where first-generation migrants were likely to orient towards traditionalism and a small, culturally constrained (e.g. similar language, similar values, similar histories) social network, the second-generation advantage extends from their affiliation with broader social networks, their increased mastery of the domestic language, and their access to advanced resources such as innovative technology and alternative funding solutions. However, a new diaspora of migrant generations is promoting a diverse growth strategy through urban vitality that expands their chances beyond traditionalism and into new, technology-enhanced, and innovation-focused businesses (Kourtit et al., 2013).

The concept of diaspora is ambiguous and has changed significantly, making it challenging to measure. Ojo (2018) defines a diaspora as a group of migrants or migrants' descendants whose sense of identity and belonging has been impacted by their history and migration. According to Safran (1991) and Riddle and Brinkerhoff (2011), diasporas are migrants who have left their origin but continue to have close ties to and affiliations with it. Although the term was initially used to refer to the forced migration of a specific group of people, it is now frequently used to refer to those who identify with a homeland but reside elsewhere (Riddle and Brinkerhoff, 2011). The term 'diaspora,' as defined by Ojo (2019), includes both first-generation and second-generation migrants who maintain connections to their home country. Diaspora communities set themselves apart from other populations through distinctions in language, history, culture, religion, and emotional ties. According to Cohen (2008), diasporas typically exhibit several characteristics, including migration– whether forced or voluntary– from the country of origin for reasons such as work, commerce, or safety from persecution or violence. Additionally, they often share a collective myth or romanticised memory of their ancestral home, maintain a sustained connection to their country of origin, possess a powerful collective consciousness that endures over time, and establish connections with diaspora members in other nations.

Overall, diaspora and migrant entrepreneurship are often discussed in the same literature (Ojo, 2019), which makes it difficult to conceptualise shared and unique qualities. According to Ram et al. (2017), the debate over these underlying theoretical and conceptual definitions should continue, while future research should be rooted locally, working in conjunction with regional organisations to offer helpful assistance to new migrant enterprises.

2.5 Evolution of Migrant Entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom

The phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship garnered significant scholarly interest across various academic disciplines during the 1960s. This pattern persisted consistently from the 1970s to the 1980s and remains ongoing in the present era (Sonfield, 2005; Vidicki, 2020). The prominence of race and identity issues became increasingly apparent in politics, economics, and society in North America and Europe during the 1980s. As a result, this topic has received considerable scholarly and research interest, as demonstrated by the studies conducted by Waldinger et al. (1990), Ram et al. (2002), Deakins and Freel (2012), Ram et al. (2017), Jones et al. (2022), and Solano et al. (2023). The 1980s witnessed notable economic and technological progress, leading to the emergence of both global challenges and opportunities (Ram et al., 2002). Governments across the globe-initiated market liberalisation, adopted pro-business economic strategies, and embraced emerging technologies to facilitate entrepreneurial activities and exploit newly identified opportunities. Multiple studies

conducted in the United States of America (USA) and Europe have demonstrated that despite a high participation rate, certain groups, including ethnic minorities, did not experience equal benefits from the programme (Deakins and Freel, 2012; Vidicki, 2020).

Based on the prevailing body of preliminary research, it is evident that ethnic minorities in the UK actively pursued self-employment to circumvent racial discrimination within the labour market during the post-industrialisation era of the 1980s. According to Ram et al. (2008), the individuals in question prioritised freedom and social mobility over economic advancement. Storey (1994) posited that most Asian entrepreneurs in the UK were engaged in the operation of retail corner businesses and the catering industry. Most individuals who ran their businesses could only stay afloat by working nonstop seven days a week and relying on their friends and family for low-cost labour (Jones and Ram, 2013). This is part of a more significant trend seen in the Western world's economy. Powell and Menendian (2016) assert that business ownership is a highly viable solution to address the discrimination experienced by racialised minorities within Western urban societies.

Considerable attention has been devoted thus far to examining the economic and sociological benefits that ethnic minority groups bring to the countries that host them (Deakins and Freel, 2012; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013; Zhao et al., 2013). Additionally, scholarly research has emphasised the development of effective policies that could enhance the entrepreneurial quality of migrant entrepreneurs (Ram et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2022; Solano et al., 2023). These phenomena may be linked to the widespread development of the small business sector, individual migrants' proclivity to create new business ventures and the current pro-business atmosphere in modern society. The surge in migration in the UK is due to several factors, such as heightened net migration, a more diverse array of countries of origin, and diverse migration opportunities, encompassing economic migration and asylum-seeking. The UK is a 'super-diverse' nation due to the coexistence of established ethnic minority groups and recent immigration, as noted by scholars such as Vertovec (2007), Sepulveda et al. (2011), and Daniel et al. (2019). This unique and stimulating environment presents an exceptional opportunity for researching migrant entrepreneurship. However, the vast bulk of the study conducted up to this point has been on Asian minorities, including Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani descent (Jones et al., 1992; Storey, 1994; Ram et al., 2017; Ojo, 2021). There have been limited studies on other racial or ethnic minority groups. For instance, there is less research on Black African migrants and their economic activities than other visible ethnic minority groups in the UK (Daley,1998; Nwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019, 2021).

The capacity of migrant entrepreneurs to shift from low-profit, low-growth businesses to higher-growth, higher-profit industries has attracted the interest of many researchers, with Ram et al.

(2017) coining the term ‘breakout’ to capture the phenomena of such a transition. According to research studies by Levie (2007) and Clark et al. (2017), UK ethnic minorities, mainly second-generation migrants, have a high level of entrepreneurship. Other research studies, on the other hand (Dana and Morris, 2007; Edwards et al., 2016), argue that migrant enterprises are synonymous with low-skilled, low-growth, and thus low-return firms, such as corner stores, restaurants, fast-food providers, and personal services. Daniel et al. (2019) suggests that transitioning from low-growth to high-growth industries, regardless of how it is accomplished or characterised, results in better entrepreneurial quality, which denotes the outcomes of entrepreneurial activities that benefit migrant entrepreneurs or society a whole. Empirical research, such as that conducted by Shinnar et al. (2011), indicates that migrant entrepreneurs who reduce their reliance on co-ethnic customers are more profitable than those that exclusively serve members of the same ethnic group. Furthermore, Daniel et al. (2019) argues that being a second-generation migrant does not affect breakout. The authors assert that breakout varies across ethnic minority groups and is often associated with factors such as educational level, English language proficiency, and employment and industry experience.

Numerous individuals choose to create their businesses to achieve tremendous financial success and have more favourable working conditions (Dawson et al., 2014; Giacomin, 2023). One of the indicators that an entrepreneur is becoming more successful is when they can cut down on the number of hours they work while maintaining an income sufficient to meet their needs and goals. Given that becoming an entrepreneur has traditionally been associated with working longer hours (Ram et al., 2017), it is significant when there is a reduction in the total number of hours put in. Engaging in entrepreneurship and self-employment is associated with lower incomes compared to being employed (Solano et al., 2023), with earnings ranging between -4 and -15% per cent when compared across a variety of industrialised nations (Åstebro, 2017). Therefore, increased profits may be another measure of enhanced entrepreneurial quality. Improved outcomes of migrant entrepreneurs transitioning from lower to higher growth industries may manifest as higher job satisfaction. According to the theory of entrepreneur-venture fit proposed by Markman and Baron (2003) and Dvir et al. (2010), individuals who possess self-awareness regarding their abilities and needs can identify opportunities that align with their abilities or needs. This alignment may result in higher work satisfaction levels (Kloosterman, 2010). This is consistent with Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (1959), which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. Entrepreneurs experiencing increased profits may find this aligned with motivators, contributing to enhanced entrepreneurial quality and potentially leading to higher job satisfaction. Improved outcomes for migrant entrepreneurs transitioning to higher growth industries could also be viewed through the lens of motivators, as the theory suggests that factors like achievement and recognition play a crucial role in job satisfaction

(Ibrahim et al., 2023).

The understanding of the nature and quality of entrepreneurship within ethnic minority groups holds significant importance due to its contribution to public discourse surrounding migration, its role in informing policy decisions, and its influence on the behaviour of prospective ethnic minority entrepreneurs (Daniel et al., 2019). The potential impact of research on policy and practice is a significant aspect that may increasingly characterise EU and UK policies in the future. The promotion of migrant entrepreneurship is being advocated to tackle various challenges, encompassing but not limited to enhancing competitiveness and facilitating integration (Ram et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2022; Solano et al., 2023). This has resulted in a wide array of valuable scholarly engagement opportunities.

2.6 Migrant Entrepreneurship and Opportunity Seeking

Migrant entrepreneurship, as per Light (2003), can be seen as a type of hidden unemployment that offers uncertain and limited benefits to only a small portion of the population. Contingent upon the net benefits and effects on a broader socio-economic scale, entrepreneurial outcomes are systemically conditioned; therefore, effects on regional unemployment, decrease in inequalities, and changes to working opportunities or growth potential are all contingent upon whether the system allows for or supports such outcomes (Hyder and Lussier, 2016). When weighed against personal intentions or goals, Ojo (2021) observes that non-financial measures of entrepreneurial success are typically based upon achievements such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, and family support. Even when such actions result in economic losses, the personal advantages of entrepreneurial activities over traditional working responsibilities can be significant, resulting in pull motives that encourage individuals to take risks and activate lifestyle changes to pursue self-employment opportunities (Ojo, 2021).

Central to the entrepreneurial opportunity framework is an underlying expectancy which links entrepreneurial orientation to national resources and systems. Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013: 820) acknowledge that globalisation has precipitated a “rapid increase of international immigration in developed countries,” resulting in an incoming population of potential entrepreneurs with diversified skill sets, resources, and visions. Through a synthesis of past research in this field, critical considerations related to immigrant endowments, policy structures, business types, global strategies, individual traits, marginalisation, institutional discrimination, and venture performance have complicated the theoretical modelling and interpretation of the migrant pathway to entrepreneurship (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013). The following provides a brief synthesis of each of these categories and their relationship to the opportunities and agendas being pursued by immigrants throughout the

developed world:

- Immigrant Endowments: The skills, resources, and experiences translated into immigrant motivation and drive (e.g. adversity effects) to establish and maintain an entrepreneurial startup (Aliaga-Isla and Riap, 2013).
- Policy Structures: The effects of internal domestic policies and regulations on migrant opportunities and entrepreneurial characteristics within the domestic market (Cantner et al., 2017; Cooper, 2021).
- Business Types: Narrowed by socio-cultural biases, skills-based preferences, and easy-entry organisations, the business types pursued by migrant entrepreneurs are likely to be restricted, selective, and targeted (Ekwulugo, 2006).
- Transnational Strategies: The mode of entry, strategic position, and long-term agenda of the migrant entrepreneur concerning the national landscape and the legislative constructs of accessibility and legal accountability (Muller and Thomas, 2001; Dorcas et al., 2021).
- Individual traits: The strengths and weaknesses characterising the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities as determined by startup arc and sustainability outcomes (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Ellmers and Haslam, 2012).
- Marginalisation: The level of exclusion or marginalisation from the mainstream economic systems of an urban environment due to group affiliation, membership, or self-identification (Udah, 2018; Daniel et al., 2019).
- Institutional Discrimination: The effects of institutional and systemic discrimination upon migrant business development in both regional and national systems are often biased towards the dominant, national majority (Powell and Menendian, 2016; Pan et al., 2019; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021).
- Migrant Venture Performance: The degree to which migrant ventures succeed under complex conditions, whereby success is manifest and interpretable according to individual priorities and interpretations of performative outcomes (Gatewood et al., 2002; Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, 2013).

In the upcoming sections, various theories traditionally associated with migrant entrepreneurship will be discussed. However, it is essential to note that these theories were not directly applied in the current research. Instead, the study developed a conceptual framework in the subsequent chapter three, drawing from other theories, addressing the limitations inherent in the

existing theories, and aiming to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial experiences of BAIEs.

2.6.1 Migrant Entrepreneurship Theories

Early sociological theories that attempted to explain the relationship between ethnicity and entrepreneurship included cultural theory, disadvantage theory, ethnic enclave theory, and blocked mobility thesis (Vidicki, 2020). These theories can be classified as cultural or structural based on the sort of explanation model they employ. Furthermore, early theories included the middleman minority, which reflects an attempt to unite the cultural and structural theories (Ojo, 2019). Thus, the cultural theory, structural theory, and middleman minority theory can be categorised as classical theories because they serve as the foundation for contemporary theoretical models such as the interactive model and, later, mixed embeddedness theory, which was developed to incorporate components of all previously proposed classical theories (Volery, 2007). The following sections examine in detail the theories mentioned above in their chronological progression – (i) cultural theories, (ii) structural theories, (iii) middleman minority theory, (iv) interactive model, and (v) mixed embeddedness.

Cultural Theory

Within the German school of economic sociology framework, the sociological study of migrant entrepreneurs originated as a direct consequence of the investigation of capitalism (Swedberg, 1991). Max Weber (Weber, 2005) and Werner Sombart (Sombart, 2001) are two theorists considered to represent this tradition, seeking the roots of capitalism in the link between the sociocultural qualities of a social group created based on ethnicity or religion and the economic development of that group. They were particularly interested in the connection between capitalism and the industrial revolution, forming the cultural theory's foundation, the earliest theoretical analysis of migrant entrepreneurship (Vidicki, 2020).

The cultural theory posits that the success of migrant entrepreneurship is closely tied to the cultural fabric of ethnic groups. This theory suggests that specific cultural qualities deeply rooted in tradition serve as catalysts, either encouraging or compelling ethnic communities to engage in entrepreneurial activities. In line with this perspective, Masurel et al. (2004) identified pivotal cultural values that significantly shape the landscape of migrant entrepreneurship. These values include a strong commitment to diligent work, a frugal approach to daily living, a readiness to embrace risks, a sense of solidarity within the group, unwavering loyalty, and a profound appreciation for one's community. Collectively, these cultural factors contribute to promoting an entrepreneurial mindset

and exert a substantial influence on the behaviours and decisions of migrant entrepreneurs within their respective communities. Thus, ethnic culture and its unique values provide vast ethnic resources that encourage entrepreneurship.

From a psychological viewpoint, having an "internal locus of control," as outlined by Mueller and Thomas (2001: 56), means individuals believe they control their actions and the potential for business success. This belief is crucial for understanding how external factors like culture and society influence individual behaviours. Cultural values have a significant impact on the success of migrant enterprises (Volery, 2007; Azmat, 2010; Yoo, 2013). According to Yoo (2013), culture plays a significant role in immigrants assimilating into a new social structure with limited opportunities. There is often an assumption that ethnic groups adapt entrepreneurial behaviours through community effect. Vidicki (2020) argues that the institutionalised system and lifestyles of the ethnic minority population may have a significant effect on a new migrant.

According to Fenech et al. (2019), a positive inclination towards entrepreneurship in a culture or society tends to align individual and social intentions, enhancing positive attitudes towards entrepreneurial outcomes. However, they argue that in Middle Eastern cultures, the lack of historical role models and the taboo surrounding entrepreneurial activities diminish the positive normative effects, particularly dissuading female undergraduates from pursuing entrepreneurship. Adding to this perspective, Eyel and Durmaz (2019) demonstrate that negative subjective norms can emerge in specific academic fields and age groups, such as natural sciences and engineering, as well as among certain generations. In these contexts, groupthink and in-group examples contribute to unfavourable norms, leading to a preference for traditional career pursuits over entrepreneurship. This underscores the nuanced influence of cultural and academic factors on entrepreneurial aspirations.

Despite the explanatory power of cultural theories, some researchers criticise them for placing too much emphasis on an ethnic group's cultural values to explain its members' entrepreneurial dynamics (Dana, 1997; Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Fregetto, 2004; Volery, 2007). Cultural theorists have been accused of entirely ignoring other significant factors of entrepreneurship, such as human capital and social mobility (Volery, 2007). To address these criticisms and compensate for the lack of explanations of these factors, structural theorists developed a novel approach to understanding migrant entrepreneurship.

Structural Theory

The structural theory is based on the idea that migrants' external environments impact their entrepreneurial behaviour. The external environment refers to the social structure and the opportunities and barriers it may present to immigrants as they assimilate into the new socioeconomic environment (Light, 2003; Ley, 2006). According to structural theories, migrants' capacities to engage in economic activities are typically limited by the structural characteristics of a society. Therefore, they turn to self-employment to overcome these hurdles (Fregetto, 2004). The theory of blocked mobility underpins explanations for migrants' entrepreneurial behaviour in the face of institutional and societal prejudice (Vidicki, 2020). Waldinger et al. (1990: 411) state that "blocked mobility is a powerful spur to business activity. Immigrants suffer from various impediments in the labour market: unfamiliarity with the language of the host country, inadequate or inappropriate skills, age, and discrimination. Lacking the same opportunities for stable career employment as natives, immigrants are more likely to strike out on their own and to experience less aversion to the substantial risks that this course entails."

The most well-known explanation under the structural approach is the disadvantage theory (Light, 2003; Ley, 2006), which is based on the premise that most immigrants have some adversities or inadequacies that hinder their integration into a new community, but also regulate their behaviour (Fregetto, 2004). For instance, migrants' inability to speak a language, lack of business experience, lack of specific skills, and absence of the required level of education pose a barrier in their job search due to a lack of human capital (Fregetto, 2004). In addition to human capital, social mobility can be affected by a lack of social power and host-society discrimination against an ethnic minority (Light, 2003; Ley, 2006).

The labour market, as discussed by Vidicki (2020), is particularly impacted by institutional racism. Entry into the market often faces significant hurdles, such as stringent requirements for formal education, proficiency in multiple languages, and possession of specific documents. Additionally, the policies of many countries towards immigrants can hinder their ability to secure legal employment, especially during the initial crucial years of their stay (Hack-Polay et al., 2020). Non-institutional forms of discrimination are recognised when 'natives' show discrimination toward the ethnic group to which a migrant belongs, causing that ethnic group to be socially excluded from both the social and economic life of the host society (Masurel et al., 2004). In this way, racial discrimination creates a cultural barrier that acts as a structural force preventing entry into the free market, 'pushing' immigrants to start their businesses.

The structural theories are flawed because they overemphasise the influence of social elements while ignoring the cultural values of ethnic groups (Vidicki, 2020). The middleman minority theory, which considers both cultural and structural factors, serves as a bridge between these two extremes.

Middleman Minorities Theory

Many migrants entering European countries like France, Germany, and the UK are refugees or asylum seekers pursuing a complex chain of socioeconomic opportunities. Characterised as the "middleman minority theory," Ojo (2012: 153) posited that due to their intermediary or middle status, many migrants would make sacrifices in foreign countries to improve their likelihood of success, improved remittances, or future opportunities to return home in a financially superior status. Affecting various trades that the migrant will likely pursue, this middleman approach includes enterprises with highly liquid assets or limited investment requirements (e.g. barber, nail technician, shoemaker, tailor), allowing migrants to establish a sustainable source of income that can be transferred or sold at a future point in time (Bonacich, 1973). As migrants gain domestic experience, leveraging what Wilson and Portes (1980) characterise as the enclave economy, they can navigate their socioeconomic status, gradually moving up the economic ladder through learned skills, social relationships, and business opportunities. Where language and culture barriers restrict direct mobility, Dana and Morris (2007) and Arrighetti et al. (2014) propose that migrants often navigate horizontally or within their ethnic enclaves as they rely upon easily accessible network resources to facilitate their entrepreneurial endeavours.

While socioeconomic systems continue evolving towards varying degrees of network continuity, Welter et al. (2015: 293) observe that "black, grey, irregular, or shadow economies exist in all countries worldwide regardless of the prevailing economic systems." Although frequently subdivided into a binary juxtaposition of formal/informal, the consequence of such gradient-based connotations can adversely affect the socioeconomic opportunities for incumbent populations (Williams, 2005; Welter et al., 2015). Historically, there is an essential justification for a grey or secondary economic domain whereby unlicensed, illegal, and small-scale entrepreneurial activities have fulfilled critical, untenable developmental functions at the formal, traditional level (Welter and Smallbone, 2011b). In the former Soviet Union, Zabyelina (2012) observes a critical legacy of non-compliance predicated upon cash and informal exchanges that negotiate systemic gaps and inefficiencies to distribute necessary goods and services otherwise excluded by formal institutions. When traditional enterprise was disbanded or bankrupted by the system itself, these transitory or intermediary workers were forced into self or informal employment activities that could meet personal or familial socioeconomic needs (Zabyelina, 2012).

For an informal enterprise to exist, economic media must allow or encourage participation, translating self-employment and disorganised entrepreneurship into enterprising solutions that reconcile systemic gaps or meet varying needs according to the ebb and flow of the system itself (Smallbone and Welter, 2011a). For example, family employment, youth working, and short-term non-licensed operations often allow micro-entrepreneurs to pursue business development opportunities during periods of difficulty or when more traditional means of incorporation (e.g. licensing, insurance, legal status) are lacking (Williams, 2005). In assessing who constitutes the informal economy and its growing population in modern economic systems, Welter et al. (2015) propose that communal patterns and socio-cultural behaviours can be observed in relation to socioeconomic orientation. While the need or the necessity of informality may establish a bounding mechanism for formal integration and participation, other variables such as traditions and affiliations can lead to the "socio-spatial embeddedness" of the informal economy in daily practice and entrepreneurial activities (Welter et al., 2015: 300).

Interactive Model

The interactive model was developed by Roger Waldinger, an American sociologist, and his colleagues (Waldinger et al., 1990). According to the model, various elements contribute to the success of a migrant enterprise. As depicted in Figure 2-1, the success of a migrant enterprise is influenced by a complex relationship between opportunity structures and ethnic group resources.

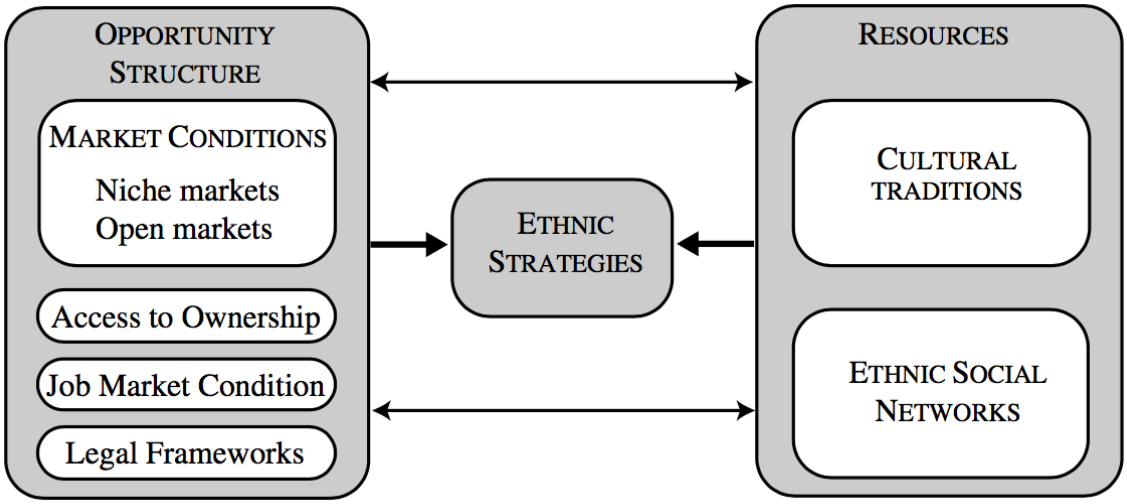

Figure 2-1: Interactive Model of Migrant Entrepreneurship (Source: Waldinger et al., 1990; cited in Pütz, 2003; Volery, 2007)

The opportunity structure comprises the institutional (formal) characteristics of the socioeconomic context in which immigrant groups operate. It includes market conditions, access to ownership, job market conditions, and legal and institutional frameworks. According to Volery (2007), these opportunities arise from forming a new ethnic enclave. These enclaves have special needs that individuals of the same ethnicity can only meet. For example, a migrant of Black African origin visits an African food store to buy imported African food supplies that are not available in mainstream UK stores such as Tesco or Sainsbury. Volery asserts, "The greater the cultural differences between the ethnic group and the host country, the greater the need for ethnic goods and the bigger the potential niche market. Nevertheless, no matter how big the niche market is, its opportunities are limited" (Volery, 2007: 34).

As early as the pre-migration stage, immigrants use ethnic networks to obtain information about their intended location, employment opportunities, housing, and other considerations. According to Waldinger et al. (1990), immigrants seek members of their ethnic group for support and information about career prospects after arrival. Moreover, ethnic resources acquired from ethnic networks constitute a kind of social capital (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). According to Portes and Sensenbrenner, social capital is "expectations concerning acting within the community, which impact economic goals and behaviour of members in line with those goals, even if such expectations are not oriented towards the economic sphere" (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993: 1323). In this context, community expectations would refer to immigrants adopting local values, displaying some degree of solidarity, and having confidence in members of their social group.

The interactive model is based on the premise that ethnic strategies depend on how a job for a particular ethnic group interacts with cultural traditions and ethnic, social networks (Volery, 2007). According to Pütz (2003), cultural traditions are explained based on the idea that some ethnic groups are more likely to be self-employed because of their culture. Although ethnic strategies are grounded in the social dynamics of the group, they are rooted in the "adaptations of ethnic entrepreneurs to available resources" (Waldinger et al., 1990: 46). The interactive model suggests that ethnic entrepreneurship is a result of the factors working on the supply side (resources) and the forces acting on the demand side (opportunity structure) (Bonacich, 1993). As a result, a larger (political) institutional framework is disregarded, which, according to Bonacich, may result in a scenario in which immigrants have no other alternative for labour-market integration except self-employment (Nestorowicz, 2012).

Mixed Embeddedness Theory

The mixed embeddedness is an extension of the interactive model. A mixed embeddedness perspective considers the economic, political, and social contexts of migrant enterprises. It acknowledges that the structures of a local economy and legal and institutional variables significantly impact the establishment and operations of small businesses in general (Volery, 2007). These opportunity frameworks disproportionately influence immigrants seeking to launch their businesses in their host societies (Razin, 2002). Mixed embeddedness is a restrictive paradigm of ethnic dependency and constraint that continues to limit the scope and diversity of opportunities for incoming ethnic populations (Kloosterman et al., 1999; Peters, 2002). Formally characterised as a combination of the "concrete embeddedness" of migrant entrepreneurs in their social networks of immigrants and their "abstract embeddedness" in socio-economic and politico-institutional environments, Kloosterman and Rath (2001: 190) observe that mixed embeddedness is a critical measure of the various forces affecting entrepreneurial orientation and achievements. Whereby socio-cultural boundaries restrict assimilation and integration into domestic society, resistance to social mobility due to personal, social, and familial dependency is likely to reduce the number of entrepreneurial opportunities for migrant populations (Kloosterman et al., 1999; Dassler et al., 2007).

Conceptually, there are three different tiers of embeddedness identified by Kloosterman and Rath (2001), including the national (e.g. government, borders, laws, markets), the regional/urban (e.g. agglomeration effects, competition, districts, development arc), and the neighbourhood (e.g. socio-cultural effects, localisation, ethnic captivity). While many immigrants will be welcomed within those urban enclaves where their socio-cultural heritage is widespread and concrete, in other, less open, and co-ethnic environments, they are more likely to be confronted with "informal practices of exclusion" (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003: 198). For example, the evidence presented by Berwing (2019) suggests that in conducting external business relationships, migrants are more likely to recruit staff and source suppliers from within their ethnic or socio-cultural niche. While this proposition is primarily network-based, it potentially disadvantages individuals seeking to maximise the efficiency or marketability of their products or services, particularly in a highly traditional or value-centric Western society (Berwing, 2019).

The proponents of mixed embeddedness contend that it is crucial to "understand the socio-economic position of immigrant entrepreneurs through considering not only their concrete embeddedness in immigrant social networks, but also their much more abstract embeddedness in the socio-economic and political institutional environment of their host country" (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001: 2). Ojo et al. (2013) observe that mixed embeddedness typically draws distinctions between the

informal and formal economic activities of the migrant entrepreneur as regulatory politicking, market controls, and government sanctions continue to affect the accessibility and functionality of these opportunities. When sufficient disincentives exist, individuals are unlikely to pursue traditional or formal economic pathways; similarly, when incentivised via policies, subsidies, or support systems, the perceived advantages of formal economic channels are magnified (Ojo et al., 2013).

The concept of mixed embeddedness has been subject to substantial critique within academic discourse. According to existing literature, the theory lacks a conclusive explanation for the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurs when compared to the interactive model, as observed by Peters (2002) and Vidicki (2020). Critiques have been raised against the theory for its failure to incorporate the historical context of migrants, as it overlooks the temporal dimensions inherent in migratory phenomena. In its current form, the theory of mixed embeddedness does not offer a comprehensive explanation of the long-term developmental trajectory of entrepreneurial activities within an ethnic community. Moreover, mixed embeddedness has faced criticism for its perceived deficiency in specificity or explicitness (Razin, 2002). Methodological limitations often hinder the process of empirically validating research findings, which arise due to the difficulties associated with operationalising and measuring variables using diverse methods (Fregetto, 2004). Further clarification and discussion are considered essential, as recognised by the authors of the model, Kloosterman and Rath (2001).

2.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a narrative analysis has been conducted on decades of scholarly works focusing on migrant entrepreneurship and the complex array of factors influencing individual, communal, and institutional achievements in advanced economies like the UK. It is crucial to note that the term ‘ethnic minority’ refers to individuals of ethnic minority lineage, whether born or immigrated to the UK, regardless of their arrival time. Classical theories have made noteworthy contributions to the literature on migrant entrepreneurship, with advocates of cultural, structural, and middleman minority theories continuing to exist today (Sahin et al., 2006; Basu, 2011; Aldrich et al., 2023). However, these theories fall short in providing a comprehensive explanation for the occurrence of migrant entrepreneurs in their host countries, facing criticism for overemphasising specific facets of this multifaceted phenomenon. In contrast, contemporary models integrate new assumptions with classical ones to comprehensively understand migrant entrepreneurship. The interactive model and mixed embeddedness theories, while descriptive, lack further development or empirical validation, as noted by Fregetto (2004). Recognising the significance of immigrants’ social and economic impact on host countries, sociologists must organise information about migrant entrepreneurship and enhance

analytical tools for its study. Various scholarly investigations stress the need for tailored interventions to address the distinct challenges encountered by immigrant entrepreneurs. The current research aims to broaden understanding and knowledge regarding migrant entrepreneurship within a specific group of migrants, namely Black African immigrants in the West Midlands. The subsequent chapter is crucial as it enables a comprehensive understanding of the existing literature on Black African immigrants and their entrepreneurial pursuits, facilitating the development of a conceptual framework to explore their individual experiences.

3 Chapter – Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aligns with research objective (RO) 1, which aimed to understand migrant entrepreneurship and the pursuit of opportunities, focusing specifically on the challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands region. This chapter provides an overview of the literature on Black African migrants and their engagement in entrepreneurship. It examines the theoretical discussions surrounding this topic. It compares them with empirical findings to shed light on the numerous opportunities and challenges faced by Black African migrants residing in the UK. The narrative review offers a conceptual framework that enables a rigorous exploration of the entrepreneurial activities of BAIEs in terms of identifying opportunities and establishing new ventures within a typical urban setting in the West Midlands region.

3.2 Overview of Black African Immigrants in the United Kingdom

The Black African migration to the UK began in the mid-1950s and 60s, with many new arrivals receiving "full refugee status" that would guarantee their economic and educational opportunities once integrated into Britain's thriving new communities (Daley, 1998: 175). While many of these early arrivals were male due to the lingering systemic biases in the African educational systems, Domboka (2013) reports that many women would immigrate in the late 1980s and 1990s in both familial and educational capacities. Despite being presented with various domestic economic opportunities, empirical evidence by Domboka (2013) demonstrates that the lack of financial resources, limited industry connections, and substantial financial responsibilities (e.g. domestic family, remittances) has made entrepreneurial enterprises a challenging proposition. African migrants who have entered the UK under educational systems have gained additional opportunities, often leveraging knowledge and skill sets to create business opportunities that are "not dependent upon co-ethnic patronage" as they exploit systemic gaps and fill needs through entrepreneurial activities (Domboka, 2013: 47).

Where other variables, such as cultural or religious value systems, dominate the idealistic profiles of these populations, the reaction to other exogenous circumstances is often mitigated in favour of normative affiliation (Nwankwo, 2005). The problem with such observations in the UK is

that they assume homogeneity across cultural populations. Nigerians, for example, are considered religious by nature rather than heterogeneous subsegments of a broader multinational population. For example, Ayuk (2002) implies that Nigerians are inherently spiritual, applying spiritual rationalisation to their entrepreneurial pursuits and deriving concepts of self and social participation from this deeply embedded spirituality. Similarly, Cook et al. (2004) have observed competitive challenges associated with religious biases and a need for secular enterprise acumen, whereby entrepreneurial orientation defaults towards religiously-embedded value systems. Ojo (2012) challenges researchers to avoid such generalisations when assessing the emergence of BAIEs in the UK, proposing that the diversity of these varied transnational populations from multiple national and cultural foundations implies a diversity of enterprise, purpose, and intention that must be weighed independently. Despite this, earlier research on Black 'Africans' and 'Caribbeans' in the UK has mostly regarded them as a single social group, although the fact that these ethnic groups exhibit significant differences in history, migratory patterns, education, and entrepreneurial practises (Nwankwo, 2005).

Since 2008, Gbadamosi (2015) observes that more than 93% of all Black African migrant-owned businesses in the UK have been micro-enterprises with less than nine employees. Moreover, many of these businesses have been established in what is characterised as "vulnerable sectors," including personal services, hire and repair, catering and accommodation, retail, health, and social care (Gbadamosi, 2015: 152). A critical contributor to this systemic bias is what Nwankwo (2005: 132) observed as the "low interaction with institutional support systems", a condition characterised by low awareness, self-exclusion, and self-preservation. Awareness effects, for example, have severe consequences on the ability of individuals to recognise and engage government resources and support opportunities, frequently limiting the migrant focus to the overarching community network (Nwankwo, 2005).

Self-exclusion represents a cognitive fissure whereby migrant entrepreneurs do not see the support systems as valuable or designed for migrant support, resulting in purposeful avoidance (Nwankwo, 2005). Finally, self-preservation stems from a fractured understanding of domestic tax, immigration, and employment laws that motivates migrants to avoid affiliation with traditional systems (Nwankwo, 2005).

The establishment of enclaves for BAIEs in the UK has led to what Ekwulugo (2006: 68) refers to as "captive markets." These markets exhibit regional distribution, cultural distinctiveness, and national exclusivity within enclaves that use chain migration to perpetuate their similarities. Drawing upon the protected market hypothesis, the extension of the ethnic niche into entrepreneurial opportunities is not only affected by changing immigration trends but regionally distributed according

to historical precedence and localisation effects (Ekwulugo, 2006). As most of these businesses are small and employ few individuals beyond the entrepreneur's immediate family, Ekwulugo (2006) proposes that there is a high degree of competitive flexibility and adaptability which extends and progressively differentiates cross-generational activities (e.g. products, brands, marketing communications, style of the outlet).

Despite the regionalisation of the Black African migrant populations in the UK, Nwankwo (2005) argues that it is a mistake to characterise these ethnic groups as a monolith; instead, subgroup concentration and regional differences have important implications for entrepreneurial endeavours. Whereas outsiders such as domestic policymakers, public officials, and local authorities are likely to be viewed suspiciously by Black African migrants, the preference for group affiliation and goal setting creates strong and sustained barriers to participation in the traditional employment sector (Nwankwo, 2005).

3.2.1 Opportunities for Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs

A theoretical proposition observed by Mueller and Thomas (2001) suggests that the congruities of national culture with migrant cultural value systems predict entrepreneurial potential and developmental opportunities. Where cultural paradigm orients towards collectivist, integrated, and participative social structures, the effects of cultural fit and congruence predict that a national culture with similar value systems would encourage more significant socio-economic opportunities for incoming migrants (Mueller and Thomas, 2001). Due to what Anderson and Jack (2010) observe as the lubricating effects of social capital, entrepreneurial capacity is contingent upon leveraging social networks to create business opportunities and develop networked growth channels supported by direct and indirect relationships. Therefore, as evidenced by Gbadamosi's (2015) assessment of evangelical Christian Black African-Caribbean migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, a dependency effect links social conditions of trust, congruency, and value alignment to economic opportunities and intra-regional growth.

Whereas migrant access to financial resources is viewed as a significant diluter of growth potential, when communities rally around complementary value systems and commitments, the openness of regional lenders to entrepreneurial investment may be improved (Martes and Rodriguez, 2004). Specifically, evidence from Brazilian communities in the USA presented by Martes and Rodriguez (2004) indicates that by participating in socio-cultural organisations such as church groups or community outreach organisations, individuals gain access to mutually reinforcing goodwill and solidarity that translates into trust and business opportunities. Docquier and Rapoport (2012) observed

that migrants from the same country of origin are likely to develop a community or necessity-oriented approach to economic growth, often neglecting other opportunities or personal objectives in favour of short-term economic returns. These dynamic platform-based solutions provide critical, high-value social assets to aspiring entrepreneurs conditioned and influenced by the affiliative link with members from a similar cultural or national origin (Docquier and Rapoport, 2012).

Despite structural and systemic gaps, evidence suggests that Black African migrants are more than five times more likely to be involved in autonomous business startups than their white domestic counterparts (Nwankwo et al., 2011). Characterised by Bizri (2017: 855) as the "one way ahead attitude", empirical evidence from refugee populations (e.g. Syria) suggests that when confronted with adversity, migrants are more likely to pursue self-sustaining employment opportunities than non-refugee counterparts. Leveraging a rich, culturally embedded sense of "collective bootstrapping," these motivated individuals utilise social networks within the target nation to develop social capital and create targeted opportunities for business development (Bizri, 2017: 857). Within migrant communities, the achievement imperative, as emphasised by Bizri (2017), plays a crucial role in the transition from poverty and refugee status to employment opportunities. This imperative serves as a motivator for entrepreneurial orientation, leading individuals to take risks, uphold social obligations, and make family commitments abroad. The framing of determination and purpose not only reshapes the developmental process into personal goals and priorities but also delineates the broader, collective consequences of failure, including its impact on families.

Ojo (2012: 145) explores the concept of "ethnic enclaves" and highlights both the opportunities and consequences tied to the concentration of entrepreneurship within the regionally oriented population growth of Black African migrant communities in the UK. From an opportunity perspective, these incoming migrants can draw upon familial and community relationships to exploit underserved domains of the domestic market, introducing new products or services or partnering to assist established businesses that are already locally embedded (Ojo, 2012). Enclave-seeking migrants, relying on a type of moral economy, rely on redistributive systems within closely-knit communities of culturally similar populations. These communities resist or avoid domestic assimilation, preferring communal embeddedness (Arrighetti et al., 2014). By acquiescing to this "middleman minority" mentality, individuals pursue business opportunities with low entry barriers, accepting culturally conscripted entrepreneurship rather than pursuing long-term agendas in more complex, discriminatory, and culturally constrained national systems (Ojo, 2012: 153).

Under the concept of collective bootstrapping is an assumption that migrant pathways are inherently intertwined, drawn from similar adversity and challenges, to form the basis for cooperative

economic development. Characterised by Logan et al. (2003: 345) as “co-ethnic labour”, these collective resources and ethnic economies can augment other challenges, such as the need for a lower-wage labour force or community experience and insider status. When ethnic collaborators are “herded into niches that constitute mobility traps,” Logan et al. (2003: 346) suggest that their external mobility is restricted, potentially diluting the potential to create independent businesses or develop entrepreneurial opportunities. Such cluster effects dilute the self-actualisation of personal goals and encourage individuals to align their intentions and objectives with the normative social status quo rather than breaking through barriers and exploring new opportunity channels (Logan et al., 2003).

For many modern African citizens, McDade and Spring (2005) observe that an increasingly entrepreneurial domestic landscape affects startup objectives and long-term business development priorities. In landscapes where socio-economic limitations create barriers to income potential, these motivated, educated teens and young adults actively pursue informal pathways that create business opportunities that can later be reclassified under government legislation as formal (McDade and Spring, 2005). As frameworks of opportunity, these conditioning mechanisms allow younger, second-generation Africans to identify business opportunities domestically, establish a self-concept, and focus on motivating entrepreneurship in foreign markets after migrating across international borders (McDade and Spring, 2005).

The decision to exploit opportunities for financial gain in the form of startup enterprises is primarily based upon internal decision-making that pairs individual awareness of market opportunities (e.g. demand profiles, innovative technology) with the motivation and capacity to establish a new business (Choi and Shepherd, 2004). Young entrepreneurs with some degree of managerial experience, for example, can use those skill sets to streamline their business startup procedures, allowing them to recruit and manage staff more quickly than their inexperienced counterparts (Choi and Shepherd, 2004). As firms expand in size and opportunity, Choi and Shepherd (2004) observe that social support within and outside the organisation will often play a critical role in predicting opportunity-seeking activities, even at the expense of the existing business model or successful marketisation strategy. Long-term goals are inherently based upon personal agendas and mission statements that reflect the personal and social priorities of the aspiring entrepreneur (Hussain et al., 2008). Therefore, where history and experience may initially define the individual’s developmental arc, over time, Hussain et al. (2008) report that other priorities (e.g. more prominent family, need more money, new industry) are likely to affect the attractiveness and desirability of the pathway to business success and achievement.

Furthermore, scholarly research has observed that migrant entrepreneurs possess a notable degree of resilience (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003; Dothan and Findiikoglu, 2017; Ojo, 2021). According to Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003), resilience can be defined as a favourable mindset exhibited in the face of adversity. According to Dothan and Findiikoglu (2017), it is widely recognised that entrepreneurs possess specific attributes, including adaptability, unwavering self-confidence, perseverance, and resourcefulness, particularly when confronted with challenging circumstances and occasionally unfavourable conditions. This phenomenon is strongly associated with the distinctive and persistent characteristics of BAIEs, who exhibit a notable inclination towards embracing risk and uncertainty, a strong predisposition towards self-employment, and a willingness to exert additional effort (Ojo, 2019).

The West Midlands' business environment is characterised by volatility and rapid change, which impact competitiveness and decision-making efficacy. Within this context, BAIEs must demonstrate flexibility and formulate an appropriate reaction to the complex structure of the surrounding environment (Mitchell et al., 2007; Domboka, 2013). Entrepreneurial orientation entails the capacity to discern situational factors, contextual triggers, and business opportunities. This ability is crucial in identifying opportunities for business development and devising effective strategies and entry structures that will guarantee the success of the business upon market entry (Bajwa et al., 2017). According to Bajwa et al. (2017: 144), the ability to display cognitive adaptation and flexibility in a complex urban environment such as the West Midlands is vital for successful entrepreneurial outcomes. Scholarly sources, including Wickham (2006) and Bridge and O'Neill (2013), suggest that individuals of Black African descent possess a tendency to adapt to changing circumstances. This is attributed to their emphasis on business as a means of attaining personal satisfaction, preserving cultural identities, expressing themselves, achieving upward social mobility, realising their potential, and experiencing a sense of liberation.

3.2.2 Challenges (Barriers) for Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Despite a desire to pursue self-employment and business development, the socioeconomic consequences of migrant identity can have a lingering effect on individuals' entrepreneurial orientation. For example, Morris and Tucker (2021: 99) observe that "poverty conditions constrain the individual's opportunity horizon, often producing marginal ventures with inherent shortcomings". The distinction between fully funded and partially funded ventures often results in survival-based or lifestyle-based ventures that avoid many growth seeds and resources needed to meet the long-term conditions of sustainable venturing (Morris and Tucker, 2021). Inefficiencies or misallocations of resources also plague those only partially supported ventures, resulting in lost income opportunities

and deficient partnerships that can create opportunities for other competing ventures (Morris and Tucker, 2021). To overcome such challenges, Morris and Tucker (2021: 101) observe that successful impoverished or low-wealth entrepreneurs will develop businesses that service "market niches not addressed by larger incumbent firms where they enhance competition, pay taxes, stabilise neighbourhoods, and are immersed in the fabric of the community."

For impoverished individuals, however, empirical evidence presented by Korosteleva and Stepien-Baig (2020) demonstrates that business owners not only lead to a reduction in poverty but also create socially contingent stratifications wherein such alleviation effects are magnified. For example, low-level, unskilled entrepreneurship will likely have a different poverty alleviation effect than higher-skill business opportunities (Korosteleva and Stepien-Baig, 2020). Regardless of entry-level, however, the evidence also confirms that entrepreneurial intentions have a positive socioeconomic influence, resulting in higher-paying job opportunities or open pathways to self-employment (Korosteleva and Stepien-Baig, 2020). This evidence of intention-based opportunity finding is an essential contribution to a field of study often concerned with systemic inequalities, as it suggests that there is a psychological advantage to pursuing higher-quality economic opportunities that have the potential to affect individual motivations in the future.

While much of the research in this field focuses on entrepreneurial success, an undercurrent of failure permeates the discourse surrounding migrant entrepreneurship that needs to be discussed. Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018) remind us that Black African migrants in the UK are not only faced with competition from their cultural members but from a rising population of migrants from various ethnic backgrounds and collective histories (e.g. Asians, Latin Americans, Middle Eastern). Driven by a variety of pull factors towards self-employment, including inspiration from past businesses, desire for independence, cultural legacy, and the pursuit of wealth, narrative evidence from UK migrant entrepreneurs suggests that there is a tension between the expected and the realised outcomes of the entrepreneurial experience (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018). Whereas successful businesses will receive sufficient funding, community support, and industry partnering, evidence from these narrative accounts reveals that failure to secure adequate funding or a lack of support will likely lead to startup failure and create additional difficulties for future business initiation (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018). As the pressure to succeed builds, Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018) report that migrants are often confronted with the psychological and social consequences of mounting failure, triggers that contribute to personal frustration and can lead to a transition in motivational forces and priorities.

One of the primary contributors to entrepreneurial failure in developed markets is social identity's role in perpetuating systemic inequalities and disadvantaging migrants seeking

entrepreneurial opportunities. Neville et al. (2018) describes the effects of historical discriminatory policies and practices in urban centres, wherein individuals seeking entrepreneurial opportunities are discouraged because of a lack of local support, funding, or market accessibility. Risk profiling, for example, is likely to discourage individuals from seeking financial assistance or loans to accelerate the likelihood of business success as they instead focus on alternative pathways, such as the informal economy or small-scale lending from family members or community organisations (Neville et al., 2018). As a discouraging phenomenon, disproportionality represents the systemic gap between ethnic groups in terms of funding likelihood, whereby groups with higher credit risks are subject to the threat of mixed embeddedness and, as observed by Neville et al. (2018), are more likely to succumb to goal-based disruption.

To monitor the consequences of discriminatory practices and contextual scenarios on entrepreneurial opportunity shaping, the paradigm of intersectionality, or the combination of multiple systems of oppression and privilege in a national environment, has emerged as a means of assessment and mediation (Vorobeva, 2019). Valentine (2007) formally defines intersectionality as interconnections and interdependence of race with other categories linked to identity effects and affiliative discrimination forces in mainstream society. While race may form the surface-level basis for identification and segmentation, other categories such as African, Migrant, Impoverished, Female, and even Nation of Origin can alter the intersectional representation of identity in the broader context of the national landscape (Valentine, 2007). In some cases, recognising these intersectional effects has allowed state agencies to develop strategies to reach under-resourced or discriminated groups by targeting specific traits (e.g. Migrant Female Entrepreneurs from Africa) in training and support programmes (Vorobeva, 2019). In an assessment of intersectionality in Finland, for example, Vorobeva (2019) observed how migrant hubs and spatial solutions could be extrapolated from identity analysis via trait-specific, narrative-oriented assessments of the skills, assets, and opportunities underscoring various migrant groups. The problem with this approach is that the ambiguity of the identification measures, the lack of integration and interaction between characteristic dimensions, and the varied opportunity structures determining the traits and experiences of the subject populations can lead to additional systemic gaps.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

In the dynamic realm of entrepreneurship, exploring opportunity recognition and new venture creation is essential to unravel the complexities faced by individuals on their entrepreneurial journey. This study takes a unique lens, focusing specifically on BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment. Using a confluence of theories, including social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner,

1979), self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987), forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Becker, 1964; Portes, 1998), and institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), a robust conceptual framework is established to dissect the multifaceted dimensions of their entrepreneurial experiences. This innovative approach, offering a novel ontological viewpoint, proves instrumental in revealing the experiences of socially marginalised BAIEs operating within the West Midlands urban market.

The conceptual framework integrates social identity theory and self-categorisation theory, emphasising the fluidity of identity, particularly in group contexts. It seeks to uncover how the social identity and categorisation of BAIEs shape their perceptions of opportunities and subsequent venture creation. Additionally, the study explores the role of various forms of capital– social, cultural, and economic– in shaping entrepreneurial pathways for BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment, shedding light on the complex interplay between capital resources and opportunity recognition. Institutional theory is incorporated to elucidate external influences and societal structures impacting BAIEs' entrepreneurial activities.

Building on the perspectives presented by Powell and Menendian (2016), Pan et al. (2019), and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021), this research defines Black African immigrants as individuals who are not native to the region, non-British in terms of origin, and non-white in racial identification. These individuals possess unique socio-cultural characteristics that play a significant role in shaping both their self-perception and how they are perceived within the broader societal context. Atewologun et al.'s (2016) study on socially significant identities reveals an interconnection between social identity, sense of belonging, and structural constraints among individuals identifying as Black men and women. Udah (2017) adds that the prevalent racial hierarchy significantly impacts these identities, with discrimination persisting in market-based economies, calling for policy intervention.

The subsequent sections of this study will thoroughly examine various forms of capital (social, cultural, economic, and human capital) and institutional theory in addition to social identity theory and self-categorisation theory. The analysis aims to uncover the complex interplay between social identity, self-categorisation, different forms of capital, and external influence, providing a holistic understanding of the factors influencing BAIEs' entrepreneurial journey in the West Midlands urban environment. This comprehensive approach contributes valuable insights to entrepreneurship research.

3.3.1 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory was initially introduced to explain conflicts between groups in increasingly heterogeneous societies (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). However, when extrapolated to address the minor inequalities or incongruities in society, such as economic status, religious affiliations, ethnic identity, and social affiliations, the potential effects of social identity formation on individual group affiliation are myriad complex. Pan et al. (2019) applied social identity theory to categorise the various groups associated with the personal affiliations of entrepreneurs, including the self (closest level of self-categorisation), the known others (community), and the unknown others (external, impersonal relationships). The affiliative assessment of these categories, their perceived value concerning self-identification, and the desirability of traits stimulate the individual towards their desired state of social affiliation.

To explain the mechanisms influencing group affiliation and self-identification, Tajfel and Turner (1979: 35) introduced social identity theory, positing that in "intergroup situations, individuals will not interact as individuals…but as members of their groups," irrespective of individual traits. Originally designed to explain conflicts within groups, social identity theory's affiliative constructs strongly forecast ingroup conformity and self-alignment across diverse social contexts (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Tajfel (1974: 69) emphasised that individuals shape their self-concept based on group membership, attributing "emotional significance" to the traits, collective histories, and values associated with their group. Labour organisation, reflecting a habitus perpetuated by group members, mirrors a status quo embedded in societal structures and patterns (Cooper, 2021). Within any social enclave, exchange relies on three transferable resources: social (heterogeneous, unequal, variable), economic (financial, institutionalised), and cultural (mobility, privilege) (Cooper, 2021).

The mechanisms within the architecture of the social landscape that facilitate the exchange of these resources are weighted according to value systems and mores that are patterned after a societal norm but reflected by using social acceptance and idealism. Through a narrative review of migrant storytelling and histories, Cooper (2021) demonstrates how parental examples and longstanding socio-cultural value systems influence the constructs of economy and culture and the characteristics and patterns surrounding social capital and exchange strategies within a given economic system. In this way, the one becomes an extension of the will of the many, drawing upon learned and collectively transferred experiences to form the normative definition of the self.

In Western societies, scholars like Ahmed (2000), Powell, and Menendian (2016), Pan et al. (2019), and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) have identified ways in which marginalised groups are

treated differently. These include using political measures to exclude them and creating cultural systems that reinforce their outsider status. Understanding these mechanisms is vital for capturing the complexity of marginalisation. The subsequent sections will delve deeper into these mechanisms.

Political Measures of Exclusion

Deliberate efforts by organised factions involve persuasive propaganda aimed at stigmatising and marginalising immigrants and foreigners, particularly spotlighting individuals of Black African heritage, as elucidated in Burnett's (2017) study at the Institute of Race Relations in the UK. Sieger et al. (2016) delve into the influence of sociocultural experiences on aspiring entrepreneurs, noting the impact of high-profile politics related to migrant rights, racial equality, and social justice on entrepreneurial orientation. Black African migrant populations are found to actively support socially responsible entrepreneurship due to collective awareness of social and systemic disadvantages. Powell and Baker's (2014) research emphasise the role of adversity in shaping founders' orientation and influencing expectations and initiatives in business development. Exclusionary state welfare regimes, discussed by Vickers and Rutter (2018), pose challenges by imposing penalties on migrants, particularly those from underprivileged classes, limiting their resources for socioeconomic advancement. This contributes to job expectations that discourage entrepreneurship. Grigoleit-Richter (2017) highlights hindrances to the transferability of migrant skills within local businesses and markets, even when possessing specialised skills, prioritising job seeking, become increasingly mobile. This mobility dynamic results in a loss of skilled labour for cities unable to retain qualified migrants, leading to an erosion of human resource advantages over time.

Cultural Systems Perpetuating Outsider Status

Within the realm of perpetuating outsider status through cultural systems, Udah's (2018) examination highlights the reluctance to support integration or assimilation of migrant populations in developed nations, rooted in the post-colonial legacy. Social systems continually categorise individuals based on race, colour, origin, or ethnicity, perpetuating differentiation and affirming negative stereotypes. Narrative evidence from Udah illustrates the persistence of social judgments and stereotypes, particularly impacting job-seeking experiences of Black African immigrants, attributed to widespread social-political stereotypes. Daniel et al. (2019) delves into the challenges faced by migrants in pursuing opportunities, suggesting industry targeting for long-term prospects, yet entrepreneurs grapple with discerning desirable pathways due to stereotypes and network constraints. Mekonnen (2018) underscores financial hurdles impeding migrant entrepreneurs, potentially leading to systematic exclusion, while legal archetypes, as noted by Powell and Menendian (2016), shape

structural conditions, with consequences of discrimination impacting economic opportunities. Franke et al. (2008) highlight the pivotal role of social capital in funding ventures, and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) emphasises the psychological impact of the absence of social identification, contributing to self-discrimination and the definition of 'other' within societal structures.

3.3.2 Self-Categorisation Theory

According to self-categorisation theory, individuals are predicted to form associations with others in specific groups through spontaneous or subconscious processes like those outlined in social identity theory (Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). The categorisation process encompasses identifying shared beliefs, everyday experiences, destinies, and value systems among in-group members and the subconscious classification of out-group populations, as posited by Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021). Individuals under the influence of affiliative tendencies tend to display positive and supportive behaviours towards members of their in-group. However, they tend to limit or avoid assisting individuals who are part of out-group populations (De Freitas et al., 2018). The affiliation bias between in-group and out-group members in developed markets poses a problem as it often results in discrimination against non-affiliated individuals. This bias excludes minority populations from normative social conditions due to their out-group status (Lang and Spitzer, 2020). Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) have conducted empirical research on migrant affiliation and self-categorisation in the EU. Their findings confirm that due to the historical colonial legacy of these nations and contemporary socio-cultural conflicts, such as anti-Muslim sentiment and the refugee crisis, populist and political narratives have incited hostility towards migrants. This has resulted in limited integration and assimilation, as in-group favouritism and out-group generalisation and stereotyping have prevailed.

Self-categorisation theory, an extension of social identity theory, posits that cognitive processing outcomes and effects are shaped by the functional interdependence between the mind and the larger society (Turner et al., 1987). According to Turner et al. (1987), individuals evaluate distinctive characteristics that shape their self-concept, such as human identity (i.e. embedded in the more comprehensive human experience), social identity (i.e. influenced by societal values and group memberships), and personal identity (i.e. comprising idealised self, goals, and preferences). Hornsey (2008) notes that the theory suggests that individuals will engage in self-categorisation only when there is a certain level of congruence between their perception of social reality and the alignment of their prototypical ideal with said reality. This is due to the complex range of social and identity-shaping influences. According to Hornsey (2008), stereotyping and self-categorisation are primarily influenced by the subjective interpretation of group constructs, biases, and values, despite potential

group variations. The desire of a financially disadvantaged person to be part of a more affluent social group will be fulfilled once their socioeconomic status undergoes a significant transformation, enabling them to assimilate and identify with the desired group. Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) have illustrated how this theory can be applied to interpreting the migrant experience. Their research highlights the challenges faced by migrants in Berlin when attempting to change their group affiliations. These difficulties result in limited assimilation to the domestic in-group while maintaining long-standing socio-cultural stereotypes as a means of self-categorisation.

Leveraging Self-Categorisation to Mitigate Othering's Impact on Migrant Identity and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

This study seeks to unravel the complex dynamics surrounding opportunity recognition and the establishment of new ventures within the urban landscape of the West Midlands, with a specific focus on BAIEs. In the context of this research, Black African immigrants are defined as individuals who are not native to the region, hail from outside of Britain, and self-identify as non-white racially. This characterisation extends beyond mere demographic distinctions, encapsulating unique socio-cultural traits that profoundly shape both their self-perception and how they are perceived in the broader societal context (Powell and Menendian, 2016; Pan et al., 2019; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). This phenomenon, whether perceived as distinctive or divergent, gives rise to a tangible sense of estrangement that has the potential to impede the organic growth of their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Powell and Menendian's (2016) analysis delve into the institutional dimensions of marginalisation and structural bias, emphasising that policies and laws often become the predominant mechanisms for institutionalising differences among groups. These mechanisms, whether explicit in racialised immigration and naturalisation rules or more surreptitious in maintaining group-based advantages, contribute to the perpetuation of in-group and out-group dynamics.

Pan et al. (2019) introduces a nuanced framework that characterises the gradient of social identity based on affiliation levels and connection degrees. This model identifies three tiers – the closest level of self-categorisation, known others within the community and localised groups, and unknown others as external affiliates – which collectively determine the weight of value-based affiliation and personal effects. Understanding these tiers becomes crucial in understanding the nuanced interplay between self-identity and societal categorisation.

Further complexities arise as Fauchart and Gruber (2011) highlight the inherent heterogeneity in entrepreneurial structures, extending across various social identities. This heterogeneity

significantly influences founders' motivations, their self-evaluations, and the frames of reference they use concerning others. Specific values and frames of reference are not only shaped by individual identities but are also profoundly influenced by complex social identities such as 'migrant,' 'environmentalist,' or 'nationalist,' as elucidated by Powell and Baker (2014).

Despite the derogatory connotations associated with othering and ethnic self-identification, there exists a potential socio-economic vision for in-group collaboration. Boyd (2012) reflects upon the multi-layered migration experiences of Black Africans, envisioning a pathway toward a group economy. This cooperative arrangement of businesses could create competitive economic advantages for ethnically diverse groups, leveraging integrated supply channels and market positions. However, Boyd warns of a potential suppression effect caused by in-group competition, leading to reduced competitive advantages for Black entrepreneurs and a reluctance to support each other's growth.

In essence, the utilisation of self-categorisation becomes pivotal in navigating the complexities of othering, promoting an inclusive entrepreneurial environment that transcends the limitations imposed by societal categorisations and biases.

3.3.3 Forms of Capital

In the complex landscape of migrant entrepreneurship, the amalgamation of financial (economic) capital, human capital, cultural capital, and social capital plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory and success of ventures initiated by individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Ram et al., 2008; Aldrich et al., 2023). This exploration delves into the unique contributions of each capital form, emphasising their complex interplay and influence on the initiation, growth, and sustainability of businesses. While the ensuing discussions may not explicitly focus on cultural capital, it is vital to recognise that the examination of human and social capital inherently involves cultural aspects, highlighting the dynamic challenges and opportunities faced by migrant entrepreneurs in their pursuit of business endeavours.

Financial (Economic) Capital

Financial capital plays a pivotal role in understanding the complexities of migrant entrepreneurship, significantly influencing the initiation, progression, and continuity of business ventures within diverse cultural and economic landscapes (Bourdieu, 1986; Saxenian et al., 2002; Drori et al., 2009). Migrant entrepreneurs often grapple with distinctive challenges when seeking financial resources, stemming from factors such as limited credit history, unfamiliarity with local financial systems, and potential discriminatory practices (Fregetto, 2004; Baptista et al., 2014; Rath

and Swagerman, 2016). Hence, a nuanced exploration of the role of financial capital in the realm of migrant entrepreneurship is indispensable for understanding the challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs and identifying opportunities for their economic empowerment.

A primary obstacle for many migrant entrepreneurs is the acquisition of initial financial capital required to launch their businesses successfully (Saxenian et al., 2002; Kašperová et al., 2022; Andrews, 2023). Migrants may encounter difficulties securing loans or investments due to their unfamiliarity with local financial institutions or the absence of traditional collateral (Rath and Swagerman, 2016). The ability to access start-up capital stands as a critical determinant of whether migrant entrepreneurs can translate their business ideas into tangible ventures. Overcoming these financial barriers necessitates the establishment of tailored financial support mechanisms and initiatives that address the specific needs of migrant entrepreneurs.

Moreover, financial capital plays a crucial role in sustaining and expanding migrant-owned businesses. It empowers entrepreneurs to invest in marketing, infrastructure, technology, and human resources, promoting the growth and development of their ventures (Bourdieu, 1986; Drori et al., 2009). Access to financial resources enables migrant entrepreneurs to adapt to changing market conditions, seize new opportunities, and enhance the overall resilience of their businesses in the face of economic challenges (Ram et al., 2002).

The influence of financial capital extends beyond the individual entrepreneur to the broader migrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. A well-supported financial infrastructure that facilitates access to loans, grants, and investment can significantly contribute to the vibrancy of migrant entrepreneurship within a given community or region (Rath and Swagerman, 2016). Conversely, limited access to financial capital may impede the growth potential of migrant businesses, hindering their ability to contribute meaningfully to local economies.

Addressing these challenges requires active participation from policymakers and financial institutions in supporting migrant entrepreneurship (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Jones et al., 2022; Kašperová et al., 2022). Tailored financial programs, mentorship initiatives, and capacity-building efforts can empower migrant entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary skills and resources to navigate the financial landscape. Promoting collaboration between financial institutions and migrant entrepreneurs is crucial to enhancing mutual understanding and creating financial products that meet the specific needs of this demographic.

The relationship between financial capital and migrant entrepreneurship is dynamic and interrelated (Fregetto, 2004). While financial capital is a critical enabler of entrepreneurial activities, the success of migrant entrepreneurs can, in turn, attract investment and contribute to the overall economic development of the host country. Recognising the symbiotic relationship between financial capital and migrant entrepreneurship is essential for devising effective policies and initiatives that promote inclusive economic growth.

Financial capital stands as a linchpin in the landscape of migrant entrepreneurship, profoundly influencing the establishment, growth, and sustainability of businesses within diverse cultural and economic milieus (Ram et al., 2017). Understanding the challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs in accessing financial resources and implementing targeted strategies to address these challenges is crucial for creating an environment where migrant entrepreneurship can thrive (Kašperová et al., 2022). As the global landscape continues to witness the contributions of migrant entrepreneurs, the role of financial capital remains central to shaping their entrepreneurial journeys and promoting inclusive economic development.

Human Capital

Human capital is a critical component influencing the dynamics and success of migrant entrepreneurship. Human capital, defined as the skills, knowledge, and experiences possessed by individuals, plays a pivotal role in shaping entrepreneurial activities (Becker, 1964; Baum and Locke, 2004; Knatko et al., 2016). In the context of migrant entrepreneurship, the capabilities and expertise brought by migrants significantly impact their ability to initiate, manage, and sustain successful businesses (Fregetto, 2004; Wang and Altinay, 2012).

Migrant entrepreneurs often leverage their human capital to overcome challenges associated with adapting to a new cultural and economic environment (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Ojo, 2019). Educational qualifications, professional skills, and industry-specific knowledge contribute to the resilience and adaptability of migrant entrepreneurs in navigating the complexities of establishing ventures in unfamiliar territories (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Wang and Altinay, 2012; Chowdhury et al., 2013).

Educational attainment is a crucial aspect of human capital that influences the entrepreneurial journey of migrants. Higher levels of education provide migrants with a broader skill set, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, which are instrumental in managing and growing businesses (Becker, 1964; Wang and Altinay, 2012). Moreover, education enhances

migrants' ability to access information, analyse market trends, and make informed business decisions, thereby contributing to the success of their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Professional skills acquired through formal education or practical experience also significantly contribute to the human capital of migrant entrepreneurs (Wang and Altinay, 2012). Whether in technology, healthcare, or creative industries, migrants bring diverse expertise that enriches the entrepreneurial landscape. These skills not only enhance the competitiveness of migrant-owned businesses but also contribute to the overall innovation and economic development of host countries (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003).

Language proficiency is another crucial element of human capital for migrant entrepreneurs. Proficiency in the language of the host country facilitates effective communication, networking, and engagement with local markets (Kourtit et al., 2013; Ojo, 2019; Daniel et al., 2019). Language skills enable migrants to build relationships with customers, suppliers, and collaborators, promoting a conducive environment for business growth.

However, challenges related to language and cultural differences can also impact the utilisation of human capital in migrant entrepreneurship. Migrants may face barriers in accessing education and training opportunities, limiting their ability to enhance their skill sets (Wang and Altinay, 2012). Additionally, navigating cultural nuances and understanding local business practices are essential aspects of human capital that migrants need to develop for successful entrepreneurship in a new context.

Policymakers and stakeholders interested in promoting migrant entrepreneurship should consider strategies that enhance the human capital of migrants. Investments in education and skills development programs, language training, and cultural integration initiatives can empower migrants to leverage their human capital effectively in entrepreneurial pursuits (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Vidicki, 2020). Recognising and addressing the challenges associated with human capital development for migrants can contribute to creating a more supportive and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Human capital is a fundamental determinant of success in migrant entrepreneurship. The skills, knowledge, and experiences brought by migrants significantly shape their ability to navigate challenges, innovate, and contribute to the economic development of host countries. Policies and initiatives that focus on enhancing the human capital of migrants can promote a more vibrant and inclusive entrepreneurial landscape, benefiting both individual entrepreneurs and the broader society.

Social Capital

Social capital serves as a fundamental and dynamic force in shaping the landscape of migrant entrepreneurship, providing valuable insights into the complex interplay between social networks and entrepreneurial activities. Defined by Portes (1998) as the resources embedded within social networks, social capital underscores the importance of social connections in promoting entrepreneurial endeavours. Migrant entrepreneurs frequently leverage their social capital to access critical information, resources, and support, which are integral for achieving success in their business ventures (Portes, 1998; Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Bizri, 2017).

In the complex realm of migrant entrepreneurship, bonding social capital emerges as a cornerstone, characterised by the cultivation of strong ties within a close-knit community (Portes, 1998). These robust connections play a pivotal role in building trust, solidarity, and a sense of belonging within the community. They contribute to the exchange of valuable information, shared cultural knowledge, and mutual assistance, collectively creating a supportive environment for initiating and sustaining business activities (Granovetter, 1985; Bizri, 2017; Cooper, 2021). For instance, research studies highlight how migrant entrepreneurs often rely on familial and community networks to access essential startup resources, navigate the complexities of a new business venture, and cope with the challenges of integration into a new socio-economic environment (Hu and Zhang, 2021; Ojo, 2021).

Contrastingly, bridging social capital involves forging connections beyond one's immediate community, establishing weaker ties with a broader network (Portes, 1998). These connections open doors to novel information, diverse resources, and expanded business opportunities (Granovetter, 1973). Migrants who adeptly engage in bridging social capital may access external markets, form collaborations, and enhance their entrepreneurial capabilities by tapping into a more extensive and varied network of contacts (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993).

While social capital offers advantages, it is essential to recognise and navigate potential challenges associated with its dynamics. The concept of 'ethnic enclaves' has been discussed in the literature, emphasising potential limitations linked to an exclusive reliance on bonding social capital. Enclaves can inadvertently promote insularity, restricting exposure to external opportunities, diverse business practices, and innovative ideas (Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Ojo, 2012; Arrighetti et al., 2014).

Moreover, the fluidity and adaptability of social capital are critical for sustained entrepreneurial success. Social structures, community dynamics, and external influences are subject to change, impacting the effectiveness of social capital in different contexts (Portes, 1998; Bizri, 2017). As migrants navigate the entrepreneurial landscape, the ability to strike a delicate balance between bonding and bridging social capital becomes crucial. This delicate equilibrium allows entrepreneurs to access diverse resources from external networks while maintaining a strong and supportive community base.

Social capital is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that significantly influences the experiences and outcomes of migrant entrepreneurs. The interplay between bonding and bridging social capital shapes access to resources, information, and opportunities. Acknowledging and understanding the nuanced dynamics of social capital are imperative for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to promote supportive environments and enhance the entrepreneurial journeys of migrants in diverse and dynamic settings. As social capital continues to evolve, its role in migrant entrepreneurship remains a key area of study for those interested in promoting inclusive economic development and promoting resilient and thriving migrant communities.

3.3.4 Institutional Theory

In the dynamic landscape of migrant entrepreneurship, the lens of institutional theory becomes invaluable for understanding how societal structures, norms, and regulations impact the entrepreneurial endeavours of migrants (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2013). Institutional theory asserts that both organisations and individuals conform to established norms, values, and regulations within a given institutional environment, shedding light on how migrants navigate and respond to the myriad formal and informal constraints imposed by the host country's institutions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Migrant entrepreneurs often find themselves grappling with various institutional challenges, ranging from legal barriers and cultural differences to discriminatory practices. These challenges significantly influence their business strategies, decision-making processes, and overall entrepreneurial behaviour (Welter et al., 2015; Dorcas et al., 2021). For a comprehensive understanding, institutional theory delves into the ways migrant entrepreneurs either adhere to or deviate from established business norms in the host country. This examination extends to critical aspects such as business registration, legal compliance, and the dynamics of relationships with regulatory bodies (Welter et al., 2015; Daniel et al., 2019).

An illuminating aspect of institutional theory lies in its capacity to reveal how migrant entrepreneurs leverage their social networks to navigate institutional challenges. Drawing on the work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Granovetter (1985), and Aldrich et al. (2023), the theory sheds light on the strategic use of social connections within their communities and the formation of alliances with fellow entrepreneurs. These social networks serve as essential resources for overcoming institutional hurdles, facilitating information exchange, and providing a supportive environment for entrepreneurial activities (Granovetter, 1985; Aldrich et al., 2023).

Furthermore, institutional theory undertakes a nuanced exploration of both formal and informal institutions shaping the opportunities and constraints faced by migrant entrepreneurs. The formal institutions, encompassing government policies and regulations, play a pivotal role in defining the boundaries within which migrant entrepreneurs operate. Cultural norms and social expectations, classified as informal institutions, also significantly impact the entrepreneurial landscape by influencing the behaviours and decision-making processes of migrant entrepreneurs (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2013).

The complex interplay between institutional forces and entrepreneurial activities is of paramount importance for various stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, seeking to promote an inclusive and supportive environment for migrant entrepreneurs (Ram et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2022; Solano et al., 2019, 2023). Institutional theory, as a robust analytical framework, enables a deeper examination of the relationships between migrant entrepreneurship and the formal and informal institutions that shape their experiences.

Migrants engage with institutional challenges not merely as passive conformers but as active agents who negotiate, adapt, and sometimes challenge the existing norms and regulations. This agency is particularly evident in the ways migrants draw upon their social networks for support and information, highlighting their ability to navigate and influence the institutional environment they operate within (Ojo, 2021; Aldrich et al., 2023).

Institutional theory provides a rich and comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics between migrant entrepreneurship and the institutional context. It goes beyond a mere compliance perspective to explore the agency of migrant entrepreneurs in shaping and adapting to the institutional landscape. By unravelling the interplay between formal and informal institutions, this theoretical framework equips stakeholders with insights crucial for creating policies and interventions that facilitate an environment conducive to the entrepreneurial success of migrants.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of the entrepreneurial experiences of Black African immigrants in the UK, revealing the nuanced interplay between opportunities and challenges that define their journeys. It offers valuable insights into the diverse experiences within this demographic, emphasising the nuanced interplay between growth opportunities and inherent challenges. The conceptual framework, incorporating social identity theory, self-categorisation theory, various forms of capital, and institutional theory, serves as a robust analytical lens for this study. It aims to unravel the complexities of the entrepreneurial experiences of BAIEs, clarifying the multifaceted dimensions of identity formation, social categorisation, and the complex dynamics of capital accumulation and institutional interactions within the realm of migrant entrepreneurship. The chapter reveals significant factors such as the impact of enclave effects on individual group affiliation and regional barriers influencing enterprise opportunities, partnerships, and community support in the context of business formation and implementation. The interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors manifests as a complex interweaving of tensions shaping entrepreneurial orientation and opportunity effects, encompassing cultural impacts, personal incentives, and societal influences. Despite scholars' commendable efforts, this chapter underscores systemic, evidential, and methodological gaps requiring empirical resolution. Given the identification of BAIEs as ‘Black’ and ‘immigrant,’ the adoption of a conceptual lens comprising social identity theory, self-categorisation theory, forms of capital, and institutional theory prove adequate for addressing their disadvantaged position. Looking forward, the subsequent chapter becomes imperative not only to delve into the regional context of the West Midlands but also to comprehensively understand the challenges encountered by BAIEs within this specific locale, laying a robust foundation for this research study.

4 Chapter – Research Context

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter describes the study's regional context– the UK's West Midlands region. This description is relevant to developing the research methodology elaborated upon in Chapter 5. The study of entrepreneurship in specific regions offers valuable insights into the local environmental factors that promote entrepreneurial traits, which are influenced by cultural, religious, generational, and socioeconomic factors (Deakins and Freel, 2012; Jones et al., 2022). The existence of opportunity structures within a particular geographic area can impact the extent to which entrepreneurialism is encouraged and the level of accomplishment attained by entrepreneurs involved in various regional pursuits. Deakins and Freel (2012) posit that the enterprising spirit may become dormant in an unfavourable environment. Therefore, the chapter needed to examine the economic geography, demography, and economic activity of the West Midlands region, along with the unique challenges faced by Black African migrants. The chapter is structured into five distinct sections: (i) Geographical Context; (ii) Demographic Context; (iii) West Midlands Economic Activities; and (iv) Regional Challenges Specific to Black African migrants in the West Midlands.

4.2 Regional Overview of the West Midlands

4.2.1 Geographical Context

The West Midlands region is located at the heart of England and continues to contribute significantly to the UK's cultural and economic environment; the region has a solid cultural and industrial heritage (ONS, 2021). According to Bryson and Taylor (2009), the presence of highly trained individuals in a region is desirable since it draws both business and tourists. Furthermore, it is widely recognised that the West Midlands region holds historical significance as the origin of the industrial revolution. It has since become a prominent global centre for manufacturing and a key agricultural and industrial hub within the UK (Riley et al., 2020).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2021) reports that the West Midlands area encompasses the administrative counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Warwickshire, along with the unitary authorities of Stoke-on-Trent, Herefordshire, and Telford and Wrekin, in addition to the seven metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Sandwell,

Dudley, Solihull, Wolverhampton, and Walsall. Figure 4-1 highlights the geographical map of the West Midlands. The map depicts both past and current district boundaries.

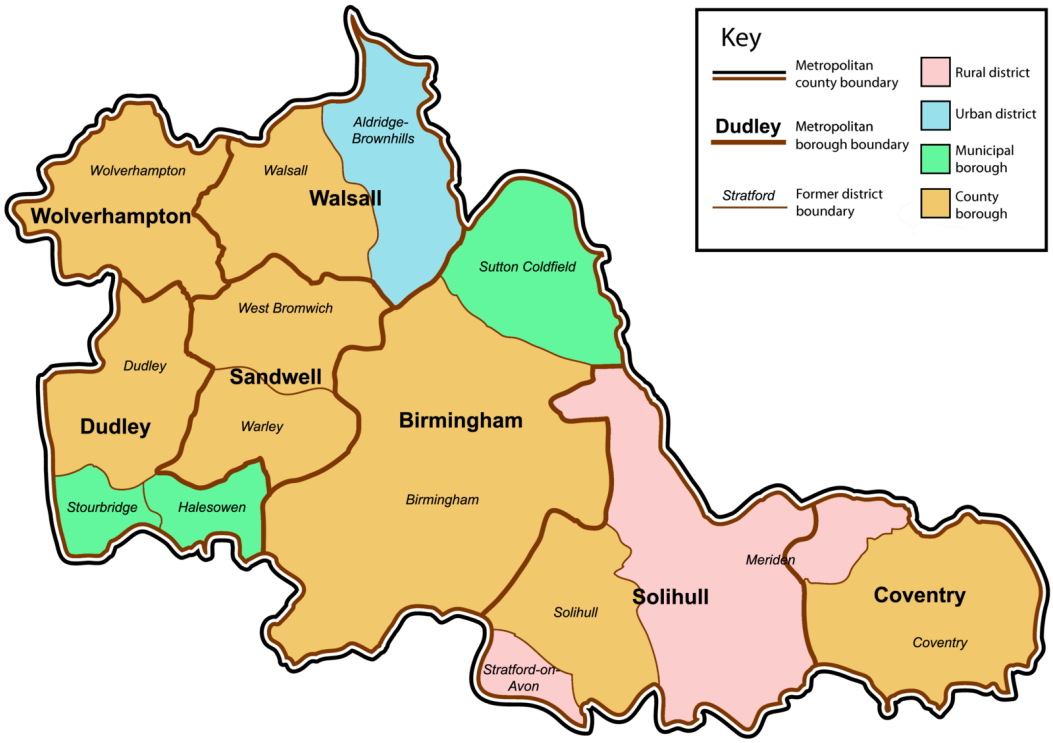

Figure 4-1: Map of the Metropolitan County of West Midlands (Source: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1974)

According to the Birmingham City Council (2022), Birmingham holds a preeminent position in the economic advancement of the West Midlands region. The city serves as the administrative centre of the West Midlands region, functioning as a pivotal point for local economic operations and job opportunities. Furthermore, Birmingham competes with other cities on a global scale and acts as a gateway to the West Midlands region. The Gross Value Added (GVA) of the city is estimated to be £18 billion, representing more than 20% of the GVA and employment in the West Midlands region (Birmingham City Council, 2022).

4.2.2 Demographic Context

The West Midlands region is the second most ethnically diverse area, with London being the most diverse (Naudin and Patel, 2019; Tshuma, 2020). The significant factor contributing to this phenomenon is the West Midlands conurbation, which exhibits a high degree of diversity (ONS,

2021). The ethnic demography of the West Midlands was determined by ONS (2021) census as follows:

Ethnic group	1991		2001		2011		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White: Total	**4,725,824**	**91.8%**	**4,674,296**	**88.74%**	**4,633,669**	**82.7%**	**4,585,024**	**77%**
White: British	–	–	4,537,892	86.15%	4,434,333	79.2%	4,275,557	71.8%
White: Irish	–	–	73,136	1.38%	55,216	1.0%	47,886	0.8%
White: Irish Traveller/Gypsy	–	–	–	–	4,734	0.1%	6,207	0.1%
White: Roma	–	–	–	–	–	–	6,809	0.1%
White: Other	–	–	63,268	1.2%	139,386	2.5%	248,565	4.2%
Asian or Asian British: Total	**297,829**	**5.8%**	**401,672**	**7.62%**	**604,435**	**10.8%**	**794,264**	**13.4%**
Asian or Asian British: Indian	158,731	3.1%	178,691	3.39%	218 439	3.9%	276,030	4.6%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	98,612	1.9%	154,550	2.93%	227,248	4.1%	319,165	5.4%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	19,415	0.4%	31,401	0.59%	52,477	0.9%	77,518	1.3%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	9,588	0.2%	16,099	0.3%	31,274	0.6%	33,301	0.6%
Asian or Asian British: Asian Other	11,483	0.2%	20,931	0.39%	74,997	1.3%	88,250	1.5%
Black or Black British: Total	**102,206**	**2%**	**104,032**	**1.97%**	**182,125**	**3.3%**	**269,019**	**4.6%**
Black or Black British: African	5,305	0.1%	11,985	0.22%	64,253	1.2%	146,089	2.5%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	78,082	1.5%	82,282	1.56%	86,794	1.6%	90,192	1.5%

Black or Black British: Other	18,819	0.4%	9,765	0.18%	31,078	0.6%	32,738	0.6%
Mixed: Total	**–**	**–**	**73,225**	**1.39%**	**131,714**	**2.4%**	**178,224**	**3.1%**
Mixed: White and Caribbean	–	–	39,782	0.75%	68,533	1.2%	81,193	1.4%
Mixed: White and African	–	–	3,683	–	9,232	0.2%	16,011	0.3%
Mixed: White and Asian	–	–	18,160	0.34%	32,561	0.6%	46,478	0.8%
Mixed: Other Mixed	–	–	11,600	0.22%	21,388	0.4%	34,542	0.6%
Other: Total	**24,328**	**0.47%**	**14,083**	**0.26%**	**49,904**	**0.9%**	**124,226**	**2.1%**
Other: Arab	–	–	–	–	18,079	0.3%	31,790	0.5%
Other: Any other ethnic group	24,328	0.47%	14,083	0.26%	31,825	0.6%	92,436	1.6%
Total	**5,150,187**	**100%**	**5,267,308**	**100%**	**5,601,847**	**100%**	**5,950,757**	**100%**

Table 4-1: Ethnic Demography of the West Midlands (Source: ONS, 2021)

Over the past three decades, a significant demographic shift has transpired in the West Midlands's region, marked by a noteworthy expansion in the ethnic minority population. Notably, the Asian or Asian British community has witnessed substantial growth, surging from 5.8% in 1991 to 13.4% in 2021. Similarly, the Black or Black British population has experienced an upward trajectory, increasing from 2% in 1991 to 4.6% in 2021. This demographic evolution stands in stark contrast to the trajectory observed in the white population, which has seen a decrease from 91.8% in 1991 to 77% in 2021 (ONS, 2021). These demographic shifts underscore the increasing cultural diversity and richness within the West Midlands, reflecting the region's dynamic and evolving socio-cultural landscape.

Name	Status	Population Estimate 1981-06-30	Population Estimate 1991-06-30	Population Estimate 2001-06-30	Population Estimate 2011-06-30	Population Census 2021-03-21
Birmingham	Metropolitan Borough	1,029,200	1,004,500	984,600	1,074,283	1,144,919
Coventry	Metropolitan Borough	319,000	303,900	302,800	316,915	345,324
Dudley	Metropolitan Borough	301,200	307,700	305,100	313,261	323,488
Sandwell	Metropolitan Borough	309,700	292,600	284,600	309,042	341,832
Solihull	Metropolitan Borough	198,600	200,400	199,600	206,856	216,240
Walsall	Metropolitan Borough	267,300	261,300	253,300	269,524	284,124
Wolverhampton	Metropolitan Borough	257,800	248,500	238,000	249,852	263,727
West Midlands	**Metropolitan County**	**2,682,800**	**2,618,800**	**2,568,000**	**2,739,733**	**2,919,654**

Table 4-2: The Population of the Boroughs in the Metropolitan County of West Midlands (Source: ONS, 2021)

As per the data presented in Table 4-2, Birmingham boasts a population exceeding one million individuals, occupying a dominant position in size and rate of changes within the West Midlands region. Birmingham is acknowledged for its diverse population, characterising its identity, independent of its previous status as a prominent industrial city (Tshuma, 2020). According to ONS (2021), the census indicated that Birmingham was experiencing a growing level of diversity in both its demographic makeup and cultural composition. This phenomenon was attributed to the contemporary trend of global migration. The Community Cohesion Strategy Green Paper published in 2018 by the Birmingham City Council indicates that recent migration patterns are influencing the city's demographic environment, leading to the emergence of super-diverse compositions that exhibit ethnic and social trends (Tshuma, 2020).

4.2.3 Economic Context

The West Midlands region had a historical period of economic success until the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. In recent times, the region has undergone a revival in its economic progress, primarily attributed to the amplification of the business and professional services industry, the upsurge in technology-oriented manufacturing, and the development of urban centres such as Birmingham (Bhattacharyya, 2019). The concentration of businesses and professional services within urban areas has resulted in heightened levels of commercial activity, including increased exportation, inflows of foreign direct investment, a more efficient manufacturing industry, and a burgeoning automotive sector that is actively addressing the demands of a carbon-neutral future (Riley, 2020).

Additionally, the West Midlands region is home to the most extensive concentration of higher education institutions beyond the boundaries of London (Bhattacharyya, 2019). The region achieved a GVA exceeding £100bn in 2020 and demonstrated a positive deviation from national trends in various economic indicators, including enterprise and employment expansion (Riley et al., 2020). The phenomenon, as mentioned earlier, was facilitated by a young labour force that migrated to the region. However, despite the reported growth, there were significant challenges, such as inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, inadequate education, and insufficient skills (ONS, 2021). Table 4-3 depicts the educational level of ethnic groups in the West Midlands.

Ethnicity	Entry level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 (original)	Level 5 (original)
Asian/ Asian British	20.8%	15.4%	34.4%	28.5 %	0.8%	0.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	24.4%	17.9%	34.3%	22.4 %	0.9%	0.1%
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Group	13.4%	18.1%	40.6%	27.2 %	0.8%	0.0%
Other Ethnic Group	41.7%	15.7%	26.3%	15.8 %	0.5%	0.0%
White	11.7%	16.8%	42.5%	27.4 %	1.5%	0.2%

Table 4-3: Educational Level of Ethnic Groups in the West Midlands (Source: West Midlands Local Skills Report, 2022: 13)

Despite increased enrolment in colleges and higher education by Black and Asian minority groups, research by Britton et al. (2021) reveals a disparity in attending high-tariff institutions and

achieving top-degree classifications compared to their white counterparts. The research underscores the challenges in accessing and succeeding in certain educational institutions faced by these minority groups. Furthermore, there is a notable occupational concentration among Black and Asian women in sectors such as sales, catering, hairdressing, textiles, and clothes, while men are overrepresented in transportation and hospitality (Bracke et al., 2021). This occupational distribution suggests the existence of industry-specific patterns that might contribute to the overall disparities in labour markets.

Addressing these disparities might involve encouraging a shift from lower-growth to higher-growth industry sectors, as indicated by studies such as those conducted by Ram et al. (2017) and Daniel et al. (2019). Such a transition would enhance entrepreneurial quality within these communities. Figure 4-2 depicts the employment rates (%) of various ethnic groups in the West Midlands region.

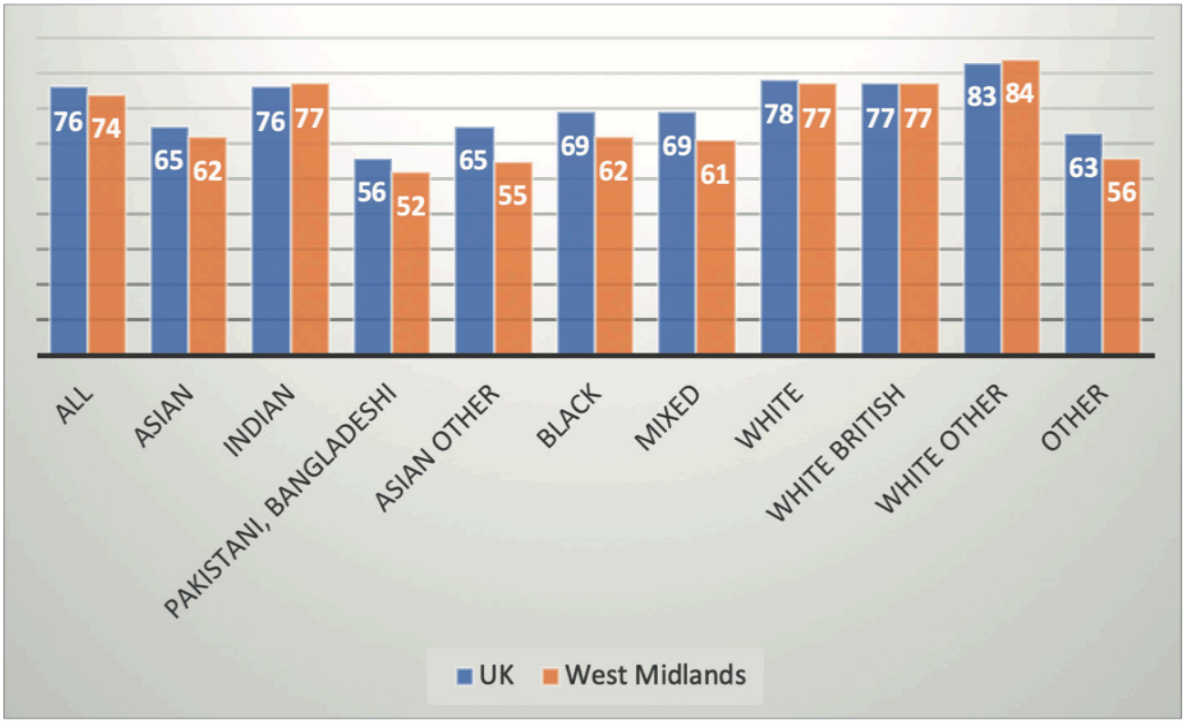

Figure 4-2: Employment Rates (%) by Ethnic Group in the West Midlands (Source: Annual Population Survey, 2019; cited in West Midlands Local Skills Report, 2022: 3)

Within the demographic of ethnic minority groups (Asian, Indian, Pakistan/Bangladesh, Asian other, Black), individuals of Indian descent exhibited the highest employment rate, with those of Black ethnicity following closely behind. Bangladeshis and Pakistanis exhibited the lowest levels of

employment. The West Midlands Local Skills Report (2022) reveals that ethnic minority individuals experience the most significant disparities in pay and in-work poverty compared to their white counterparts. The Covid-19 pandemic has further intensified the pre-existing ethnic inequalities in employment rates in the West Midlands (Bracke et al. (2021).

4.3 Regional Challenges Faced by Black African Immigrants in the West Midlands

Nizeyimana, the chair of One Africa Network suggests that the economic and support models currently used in the West Midlands must be revised to promote inclusive and sustainable growth (Kabote, 2020). Numerous academic and governmental studies have highlighted and supported that African entrepreneurs exhibit more remarkable entrepreneurial persistence and aspirations to establish startups than their white counterparts (Black Business Network/ Lloyds Bank, 2021). Nevertheless, many individuals need more support and confront challenging obstacles to introduce their concepts into marketing and expand their enterprises (Kabote, 2020). Studies have shown an uneven market distribution of support and funding programmes. Ram (2017) asserts that these programmes are exclusive, difficult to obtain, and targeted towards high-growth enterprises. According to Kabote's (2020) research, BAIEs in the West Midlands face several notable challenges. The challenges identified in this context include limited access to finance and growth capital, inadequate financial management and controls, deficient management skills, insufficient technology adoption, inadequate branding and marketing, suboptimal handling of customer service, lack of product innovation, and inadequate entrepreneurial ecosystems and networks. The challenges mentioned are accompanied by institutional inequalities noted by several researchers, including Nwankwo (2005), Ekwulugo (2006), and Ojo (2019, 2021).

The official recognition of 'Black African' as a distinct census group in the UK emerged in the 1990 census, despite their long-established presence in the country for several centuries (Daley, 1998; Domboka, 2013). This delayed recognition can be attributed to an inequitable political system and framework that has historically deprived them of equal treatment and acknowledgement. Despite the recognition of their social categorisation, individuals of Black African and Caribbean migrant heritage are still being classified into complex and overlapping categories, such as 'Black,' 'Black British' and others, as demonstrated in the 2021 census (refer to Table 4-1). Empirical data indicates that social categorisation tends to overlook the nuances of diverse cultural heritages, historical contexts, and national origins and instead relies on a rudimentary shared trait that reinforces the perpetuation of marginalisation. This action serves to underscore the societal positioning of marginalised groups within the historical, socio-political, and economic context of the UK.

The enduring socio-political disparity of historical significance has resulted in additional economic disparity fortified by various institutions' policies. There is an assertion made that the practice of 'othering' has a significant effect on communities of Black and immigrant individuals, resulting in the estrangement of multiple generations of minority groups and the deprivation or limitation of their ability to obtain resources and opportunities, likened to a form of collective punishment or 'ethnic penalty' (Fraser, 2005). BAIEs in the West Midlands may experience marginalisation through 'othering' across societal, individual, and institutional domains. The impact of entrepreneurial activities may be more significant at the institutional level, as Powell and Menendian (2016) and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) suggested.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The West Midlands region is geographically located in the central part of England. It continues to play a significant role in shaping the cultural and economic fabric of the UK. The region boasts a rich legacy in both cultural and industrial domains. The region's desirability is enhanced by the presence of individuals with advanced educational training, as it attracts both commercial enterprises and tourists. According to the Birmingham City Council (2022), Birmingham occupies a prominent position in the economic development of the West Midlands region. The urban area operates as the primary administrative hub for the West Midlands region, playing a crucial role in facilitating local economic activities and employment prospects. The region has experienced an increase in the number of Black African immigrants and other ethnic minority individuals (as described in Section 4.2.2), resulting in a shift in the diversity and dynamics of the population. As expounded in the preceding chapters, the migration phenomenon presents novel prospects and obstacles. Black African migrants encounter obstacles that hinder their capacity for employment and entrepreneurship. Section 4.3 highlights BAIEs' notable challenges in the West Midlands. These challenges are evidence of the marginalisation of Black African immigrants in the region, which can negatively impact their sense of inclusion and limit their ability to access essential resources and opportunities in urban markets. The following chapter outlines the methods employed to explore BAIEs' experiences in the West Midlands and to provide an honest, comparative narrative analysis of the experiences and perspectives of these courageous populations as they navigate the perilous domestic marketplace.

5 Chapter – Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Upon completing the literature review chapters, a critical reflection has identified potential research gaps in the domain of migrant and Black African immigrant entrepreneurship (Saunders et al., 2015). This realisation prompts a strategic navigation of the research landscape, guided by ontological and epistemological beliefs that influence the researcher's understanding of the world and knowledge acquisition. Qualitative research, deeply rooted in these fundamental beliefs, necessitates a methodological approach crafted with careful consideration of ontological assumptions and epistemological considerations (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Symon and Cassell, 2012).

To provide a clear justification for the chosen approach and reestablish a connection with the overarching research aim, a revisiting of the research questions from Chapter One is crucial before delving into the complexities of the selected methodology. The primary aim is to explore the entrepreneurial activities of BAIEs, with a specific focus on opportunity recognition and new venture creation in the urban setting of the West Midlands. Recognising the value of context-specific knowledge for effective decision-making and problem-solving (Bazeley, 2021), the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands identify opportunities and translate them into new business ventures?
2. What motivates BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands to transform opportunities into new business ventures?
3. How do BAIEs establish their entrepreneurial objectives within the urban landscape of the West Midlands?
4. In what ways does the institutional structure of the West Midlands influence the processes of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs?

Grounded in the view that reality construction is a social phenomenon influenced by individual consciousness (Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017; Ray and Locsin, 2023), the researcher adopts a phenomenological strategy. This approach assumes that understanding socially constructed and individually perceived reality necessitates examining the unfolding process by which it is formed. Rooted in phenomenology (interpretivism), this research approach aims to understand the essence of

individuals' everyday experiences with reality from their subjective perspective (Moustakas, 1994). According to Beck (2021) and Ray and Locsin (2023), phenomenological research generates knowledge through the iterative process of reinforcing and accumulating evidence.

This chapter aims to provide a logical flow by thoroughly examining the research methodology, covering key aspects such as (i) Unravelling Truth and Social Realities; (ii) Intersection of Phenomenology and Narrative Inquiry; (iii) Navigating Qualitative Exploration through Semi-Structured Interviews; (iv) Administration and Data Collection; (v) Data Analysis; and (vi) Ethical Considerations in Interpretivist Research.

5.2 Interpretivist Paradigm: Unravelling Truth and Social Realities

Understanding social research is a series of what Saunders et al. (2015) refers to as research philosophy that draw upon preconceived notions about truth and its attainability via empiricism. O'Reilly and Kiyimba (2015: 3) further defined a research philosophy as the "basic set of beliefs held by the researcher guiding their actions." In the case of social research, this outcome has an intrinsic link to some form of a causal relationship, whereby complexity often spawns creativity and adaptation in methodological design (Patton, 2015; Greening, 2019). Saunders et al. (2015) contend that research philosophy has three main paradigms: positivist, interpretive, and pragmatist. The interpretive paradigm was adopted for this current study due to its benefits in terms of narrative concentration, a concentrated emphasis on reflective experience, and the capacity to evaluate outcomes from limited sample size. According to Saunders et al. (2015), a vital aspect of the interpretive paradigm is that scientific knowledge is constructed through virtual experiences and conversations, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, the research aim and objective necessitate a comprehensive exploration of the individual experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment.

The interpretivist paradigm originated within the social sciences and is based upon the belief that outcomes are socially constructed, with situational, experiential, and sociological forces shaping individual responses to changing phenomena (Bryman, 2015). By developing qualitative instruments such as interviews or focus groups, researchers can employ a structured and open-ended interview guide to extract insider narrative and reflections about similar phenomena across diversified periods and event cycles (Jonker and Pennink, 2010; Van Manen, 2016). Hussain et al. (2008) employed a purely qualitative approach to capture interview evidence from a discrete sample of BAME graduates within the West Midlands, weighing the variable motivations and entrepreneurial traits reported across these open-ended prompts to characterise group priorities and value systems. A similar

approach was considered for the current study involving a targeted interview that could be administered to a discrete sample of BAIEs in the UK to assess their individual experiences and developmental challenges. While these approaches prove effective in social research settings, Bryman (2015) emphasises that interpretivism often faces criticism for its subjective orientation. This criticism stems from both a discrete participant perspective and concerns about potential interference from researcher biases, such as those related to culture and experience, influencing the inductive analysis.

The researcher does not claim neutrality in the inquiry for this present study. Regarding personal biases, he was aware of his philosophical beliefs, connections, and methodological preferences (Greening, 2019; Smith et al., 2022; Ray and Locsin, 2023). Thus, the researcher takes an active role because he understands the value of the study issue to him personally and professionally. Reflective and reflexive practises are necessary to ensure the integrity of this study since the researcher is conscious of his existing knowledge and experience and the risk of bias or distortion (See Section 5.2.2). This assertion is consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979), which posits that individuals approach a subject matter with both implicit and explicit assumptions. According to the subjectivist viewpoint, the researcher also contends that knowledge is theory-laden and impacted by the researcher's past knowledge, experience, views, values, belief systems, and interpretations, reflected in how language is used, and context is understood (Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017). This assertion is supported by Ray and Locsin (2023), who argue that subjectivist beliefs are related to the ontological character of the social realities we experience. From a philosophical standpoint, these assumptions imply that our perception of social reality is a construct or manifestation of our consciousness and cognitive processes. The commonly held assumption is that the external world lacks actual independent existence separated from the process of cognition. The construction of the social world is contingent upon our understanding and interpretation of it. Our understanding of our involvement in these creative processes is likely limited.

Further, Blackburn (1996) explains the truth and its condition by using the contextual meaning of human language. Per the author's assertion, a statement is valid if it conveys a proposition that can be true or false in each context and articulated with its present connotation. The truth condition refers to the necessary condition that must be met by the world for a statement to be considered valid. Understanding this provision is tantamount to understanding the significance of a sentence in a participant's response. For depicting truth as 'universal,' 'true in all times and circumstances,' and for ruling out the possibility of truth's subjective interpretation and context-specific consequences, Blackburn (1996) labels the positivist position as 'misconceived.' For this current study, the researcher argues that 'truth' or 'concept' do not have any intrinsic logical or natural properties or relationships that would ensure their permanent preservation. The researcher further argues that truth

and its relevance depend on whether people in a particular culture, time, and place agree. These cultures' thoughts, beliefs, and values can change following their environment and customs. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Greening (2019), as a society's norms, values, attitudes, and assumptions evolve, such changes affect language semantics and the 'idea' we perceive. This study seeks to explore the individual experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands region to develop a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial process. The study will specifically explore the impact of the surrounding environment on these individuals. The researcher explores the unique circumstances surrounding BAIEs, which include environmental factors, immigrant identities and characteristics, socio-political factors, and economic factors. These factors collectively contribute to a contextual understanding of their individual experiences.

The epistemological and ontological findings of Blackburn (1996) and McAuley et al. (2007) regarding the concept of truth in their respective languages frequently connect with attitudes acquired through the incorporation of language used within a particular community. Language application obscures the differentiation between the conveyed ideas and intentions and the implications or directives implied by the terminology used. Van Manen (2016) posits that truth and falsehood are direct links between beliefs and facts rather than metaphorical associations between terms representing different viewpoints throughout history. Beliefs are cognitive constructs that undergo development, and there is a link between beliefs and various levels of certainty or confidence. McAuley et al. (2007) and Greening (2019) posit that language is the sole means of conveying reality, characterised by its arbitrary, artificial, and relative nature, thereby establishing the parameters of linguistic expression. The concepts mentioned above enhance the legitimacy of the interpretive study.

From a subjectivist perspective, this study identifies BAIEs' actual social reality as contextual, diverse, normative, subjective, and socially constructed. The author of this study concurs that the only way to ascertain the veracity of any knowledge claim is to consider the pursuit of the objectives that epistemic individuals inscribed throughout the process of social construction. Such pursuits include goal-directed human acts and interventions that, via concrete endeavours, address the tolerance of a reality unaffected by the human mind (Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Spinelli, 2005; Greening, 2019). Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge and document the socially constructed image of the reality of BAIEs. Developing a more profound understanding and insight derived from the perspective of this particular social group may catalyse policymakers and practitioners to initiate transformative measures within the West Midlands region aimed at promoting positive changes such as equality, justice, fairness, and pragmatic interventions.

5.2.1 Exploring Alternative Paradigms for this Study

The positions of the positivist and pragmatist paradigms were also weighed against the applicability to this current research problem. When weighing the position of the positivist paradigm, it was discovered that it is frequently adapted to social research but originated in the natural sciences. It seeks to extrapolate truth and known relationships from structured, quantitative techniques (Bryman, 2015). A core strength of the positivist approach to social research is its ability to compare perspectives of large sample populations across static, replicable instruments such as surveys, questionnaires, or experiments (Jonker and Pennink, 2010; Saunders et al., 2015). These results can be analysed using appropriate statistical and comparative tools, precipitating the proofs needed to validate an underlying hypothesis or prediction. Ekwulugo (2006) used a modified form of quantitative technique to compare population data for BAME populations in London, weighing strategic growth against various social, economic, and environmental limitations. A similar approach was considered for the current study. A large sample of Black African immigrant representatives from the UK could be targeted for survey completion, providing comparative insights related to specific variables such as entrepreneurial orientation, motivation, social support, and systemic discrimination. However, one of the problems with positivism in social research is its structural limitations, whereby instrument design and focusing are reduced to specific questions that direct responses to a specific rather than discovered empirical outcome (Bryman, 2015). By applying such instruments, the distinction in responses becomes either confirmation or rejection of narrow and targeted hypotheses, exposing the findings to issues with generalisability and representation, mainly when the instrument itself is structurally limited and researcher defined.

Furthermore, when weighing the position of the pragmatist paradigm against the applicability to this current research problem, it was discovered that this paradigm is also widely applied to social sciences research, and it believes that actions and experiences cannot be systematically or interpretively separated from their origins (Morgan, 2015). The effect of pragmatist reasoning on empirical research is an adaptive orientation of purpose, method, and empirical sources most frequently recognised in mixed methods research (Creswell and Clark, 2017). Fielden and Davidson (2012) adopted a form of pragmatism to assess the degree of discrimination experienced by female BAME entrepreneurs in Northwest England, applying quantitative demographics to a critical interpretation of interview results via typological comparisons. Although effective from a comparative perspective, the diversity of the sample and the lack of generalisability across the ethnically diverse sample population resulted in an output that has general or broad relevance for female BAME entrepreneurs as a category but lacks the specific narrative arcs of a more in-depth and targeted developmental study. Pragmatism was criticised for its lack of structural rigidity and systemic

controls, exposing the research pathway to a variety of reliability and validity concerns (Morgan, 2015).

5.3 Qualitative Research: Intersection of Phenomenology and Narrative Inquiry

This study delves into the subjective experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands concerning opportunity recognition and new venture creation. The research employs an interpretive approach, firmly grounded in the realms of phenomenology and narrative inquiry. This section acknowledges the intrinsic value of qualitative research, emphasising its ability to capture the nuanced complexities woven into the human experience (Corbin and Strauss, 2015; Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017; Giorgi, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Beck, 2021).

5.3.1 Phenomenology Unveiled: Reflective Experience and Human Consciousness

Phenomenology, championed by influential figures like Husserl and Heidegger, stands as a profound philosophical framework with a pronounced emphasis on reflective experience (Goodall, 2014; Van Manen, 2016; Ray and Locsin, 2023). This approach goes beyond surface-level exploration, delving into the intricate realm of human experiences and unveiling the perception of objects as they manifest in consciousness (Van Manen, 2016). The essence of phenomenological research lies in its commitment to understanding the world through the perspectives of participants, establishing a direct link between social reality and their lived experiences (Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017; Bazeley, 2021).

By anchoring social reality in the first-hand experiences of participants, phenomenological research seeks to unravel the nuances and complexities of human consciousness (Van Manen, 2016; Bazeley, 2021). This approach surpasses mere observation of events, aiming to capture the underlying meanings and interpretations individuals attach to their encounters with the world. Emphasising reflective experience within phenomenology propels the researcher into the realm of understanding how individuals construct their own social realities, making it an invaluable method for unravelling the layers of subjective experience (Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017; Ray and Locsin, 2023). The contributions of phenomenology to qualitative research extend beyond methodological considerations, acting as a bridge between the subjective and the objective (Goodall, 2014). This allows researchers to navigate the complex landscape of human consciousness, providing a philosophical foundation that facilitates a nuanced exploration of the multifaceted nature of reality– an indispensable tool for studies seeking to capture the depth and richness of human experience (Van Manen, 2016; Bazeley, 2021).

5.3.2 Narrative Inquiry Unearthed: Stories Shaping Entrepreneurial Journeys

Narrative inquiry, on the other hand, serves as a dynamic research approach, cantering around the stories individuals craft to interpret their experiences and navigate the complexities of the world (Clandinin and Connelly, 2004; Clandinin et al., 2006; Creswell, 2013). This methodological framework provides a structured lens through which researchers can understand the unique narratives of BAIEs, shedding light on how these stories shape their entrepreneurial journey. Narrative inquiry is fundamentally rooted in the recognition of the significance of personal narratives in capturing the intricate layers, complexities, and depth of human experiences, aligning with the belief that individuals make sense of their lives through the stories they tell (Clandinin et al., 2006; Riessman, 2012; Creswell, 2013).

Narrative inquiry is a tool that transcends mere data collection; it acts as a guide to unearth the underlying meanings within the stories of BAIEs. The emphasis on stories as a primary mode of expression in narrative inquiry underscores the belief that these narratives are not just vehicles for recounting events but are essential in understanding the internal processes of meaning-making (Lieblich et al., 1998; Creswell, 2013; Van Manen, 2016). By homing in on the stories of BAIEs, narrative inquiry allows researchers to explore the complex ways individuals construct and interpret their experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the meaning-making process. This approach acknowledges that narratives go beyond surface-level accounts, offering a profound insight into the subjective world of the narrators and contributing to a richer understanding of the entrepreneurial journey of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment.

5.3.3 Integrating Phenomenology and Narrative Inquiry: Unveiling Reflective Experience

The chosen research methodology integrates both phenomenology and narrative inquiry within the framework of qualitative interpretive research, as it unveils the essence of human experience and provides a comprehensive account of reflective experience (McAuley et al., 2007; Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017). Reflective experience involves a “reflexive awareness” that implies ownership and belonging, requiring “objective” reflection and discourse (Van Manen, 2016: 36). It is not merely an immediate manifestation but a reflection on a “past presence” that implicates the totality of life, challenging researchers to evolve methods and instruments capable of capturing such reflective insights (Van Manen, 2016).

In phenomenology and narrative inquiry, distinguishing the objective from the immediacy of the subjective response to experience is crucial. While sudden events prompt immediate, reactive

defence mechanisms, reflective experience involves conscious rationalisation, weighing, and processing of event dynamics, leading to long-term implications for perception and self-actualisation (Van Manen, 2016; Ray and Locsin, 2023). Gadamer (2004) argues for a situational broadening to provoke interpretation, enabling individuals to critically reflect on their experiences.

The interpretivist paradigm, underpinning this study, emphasises a collective understanding that frames distinctions between self and others in the context of experience (Davies and Gannon, 2006). Collective biography processes, as described by Davies and Gannon (2006), layer interpretations and experiential insights into a collective understanding. In this study, a similar approach is adopted, focusing on a composite evaluation of participant responses once thematic mapping and interpretation have taken place. Aligning participant responses according to underlying prompts facilitates a benchmarking of the legitimacy and value of varying triggers in the collective progression from opportunity recognition to new venture creation (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

This study uses phenomenology and narrative inquiry to uncover the subjective experiences of BAIEs, acknowledging the significance of reflective experience and narrative construction. By adopting an interpretive paradigm, the research aims to capture the essence of human experience and contribute to a more profound understanding of the entrepreneurial journey. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of social reality, shedding light on the complexities of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment.

5.4 Methodological Instrumentation: Navigating Qualitative Exploration through Semi-Structured Interviews

In the exploration of the subjective experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment regarding opportunity recognition and the establishment of new ventures, the choice of a research method is crucial. Methods serve as a systematic guide to gathering data, unlocking profound insights from the information obtained (Symon et al., 2012; Grey, 2017). As Jankowicz (2000) asserts, the researcher's methodological inclination significantly shapes the selection of a specific research method.

Symon et al. (2012) define 'method' as an instrument or technique for collecting and analysing data, encompassing diverse tools such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations. This definition is further underscored by Punch (1998), who argues that broader methodological tendencies and theoretical frameworks substantiate this assertion. Symon et al. (2012) highlight a spectrum of techniques within qualitative research for empirical data collection, ranging from interviews and

observations to visual texts.

In alignment with the interpretive paradigm and the chosen qualitative approach, this study employs a semi-structured interview method. This approach is deemed most fitting for conducting phenomenological research, given its inherent capacity to facilitate an interpretive inquiry into the complex nature of human experience (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2016; Grey, 2017; Ray and Locsin, 2023). The chosen method revolves around understanding the nuanced experiences of BAIEs by diligently exploring the depictions of their personalised environments.

The semi-structured interview design offers a balanced framework, allowing for a thoughtful exploration of participants' narratives while maintaining a degree of flexibility to delve into unexpected insights (Van Manen, 2016; Ray and Locsin, 2023). By adopting this method, the study aspires to capture the richness and complexity of the entrepreneurial journey among BAIEs, unravelling the subjective meanings attached to their experiences. The emphasis on interpretive inquiry aligns with the overarching aim of this research– to delve into the depth of human experience and shed light on the complexities of opportunity recognition and new venture creation within the West Midlands urban landscape.

5.4.1 Strategic Participant Selection: Mapping Diversity in Birmingham

The researcher recognises the interdependence between the methodological orientations, study aim, objectives, and questions, and the strategies and processes for participant recruitment and sampling. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling, is extensively employed in qualitative research (Palinkas et al., 2013). This sampling approach requires the researcher to exert understanding in selecting specific representatives, thereby offering valuable insights into the research questions, and aligning with the designated aim and objectives. The current research study outlines the criteria set forth by the researcher to select potential participants from the Black African immigrant entrepreneurial community. The participant selection process involves identifying individuals who possess the ability to provide comprehensive data and practical answers to the questions aligned with the research aim and objectives (Symon et al., 2012).

Purposive sampling is a research technique that intentionally selects individuals with diverse backgrounds to present various viewpoints and perspectives (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Palinkas et al., 2013). The study considered individuals from diverse industry sectors, such as Retail, IT, Robotics, Accounting/Finance, Music production, and Robotics. Additionally, the research included participants from different age ranges and various countries of origin, focusing on individuals from the Sub-

Saharan region of Africa. This study aimed to provide significant insights through a personal experiential approach to narrative storytelling and collective historical analysis by the selected individuals. The following were the established standards for inclusion:

- The individual must be of Sub-Saharan African descent.
- The individual must have a registered business address.
- The individual must have been in business for at least one year.
- The individual must be a resident of the West Midlands.

The region-specific control measure ensured that the research findings were selective, comparable, and interpretable according to BAIEs' deeply embedded shared socio-cultural activities in the UK. Table 5-1 provides a visual representation of the participants recruited for this study.

Participants (P)	Sub-Saharan Africa (Country of Origin)	Length of Ownership Oversight of Current Business	Legal Status of Enterprise	Location
P1	Ghana	2years	Sole Proprietorship	Birmingham, UK
P2	Ghana	4years	LLC	Birmingham, UK
P3	Côte d'Ivoire	3years	S Corporation	Birmingham, UK
P4	Guinea	2years	Partnership	Birmingham, UK
P5	Ghana	2years	LLC	Birmingham, UK
P6	Sierra Leone	1year	Partnership	Birmingham, UK
P7	Nigeria	1year	LLC	Birmingham, UK
P8	Nigeria	4years	Sole Proprietorship	Birmingham, UK
P9	Nigeria	1year	LLC	Birmingham, UK
P10	Nigeria	2years	S Corporation	Birmingham, UK

Table 5-1: Overview of Participants' Profile

Other desirable requirements were a varied set of innovative industries, a diverse gender profile, and a young entrepreneurial profile. It is crucial to underscore that the justification for selecting participants primarily from Birmingham is rooted in the city's representation of the urban environment within the West Midlands region. As discussed within the research context chapter of this study– Chapter 4, Section 4.2, Birmingham assumes a prominent role in facilitating economic

advancement within the West Midlands region. The city serves as the central administrative centre for the West Midlands region, playing a pivotal role in facilitating local economic activities and offering employment opportunities. Furthermore, Birmingham engages in competition with other urban centres on a global scale and serves as a crucial gateway to the West Midlands region. The Birmingham City Council (2022) reports that the estimated GVA of the city is £18 billion, representing more than 20% of the GVA and employment in the West Midlands region. Birmingham exhibits a notable feature of having a population exceeding one million inhabitants, thereby establishing its prominence in terms of both size and population expansion within the West Midlands region. According to the ONS in 2021, an analysis of census data indicated a notable rise in diversity within the city of Birmingham. This diversity encompasses various demographic attributes and cultural elements, leading to the emergence of super-diverse compositions characterised by distinct ethnic and social patterns. Considering recent community engagement in Birmingham, governmental entities and local support organisations have placed emphasis on the advancement of small businesses, with a particular focus on those owned by individuals of Black descent. This strategic approach aims to promote empowerment and expedite the expansion of these enterprises (Hyatt, 2020). Based on the above critique, the rationale for selecting residents from Birmingham City is apparent.

Participant Selection Strategy: Employing the Snowballing Approach

The snowballing approach, as outlined by Faugier and Sargeant (1997) and Van Meeteren (2010), was employed to initiate the recruitment process through the researcher's social network. This method was instrumental in identifying and engaging with fourteen individuals. The initial participant, upon recruitment, played a pivotal role by providing referrals to other potential participants. Subsequently, these newly identified individuals, in turn, contributed to the expansion of the participant pool by referring additional candidates. This cascading effect continued until a robust and diverse sample population of BAIEs was established for the study.

Despite encountering challenges where three individuals did not meet the specified inclusion criteria, and one potential participant did not participate as initially anticipated, the final sample population comprised ten individuals who met the criteria and actively participated. This deliberate selection process resulted in a refined and focused sample, consisting of residents from Birmingham, West Midlands.

While this approach may have narrowed the initial pool of potential participants, its strategic application ensured that the selected individuals provided valuable insights. By benchmarking key

socio-cultural observations against similar geographic, situational, and systemic contexts, the study gained a deeper understanding of the experiences of BAIEs in the specific setting of Birmingham. This intentional selection process enhanced the study's reliability and relevance, offering a nuanced exploration of the opportunities, challenges, and support networks encountered by BAIEs in the West Midlands region.

Justification for Sample Size in Phenomenological Exploration

Determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research is a nuanced process that involves careful consideration of several factors, as highlighted by Baker and Edwards (2012). Striking a delicate balance, as emphasised by Sandelowski (1995), is crucial– ensuring the sample is large enough to capture the complexity of the subject matter while remaining small enough for a detailed analysis of individual cases. Morse (2000) adds a layer to this discussion, emphasising the value contributed by each participant, implying that fewer participants may be sufficient if they offer rich and meaningful insights. This consideration extends to the study's scope, the nature of the problem, and the quality of data, echoing Morse's sentiments (2000).

In this context, scholars like Bizri (2017) argue for the adequacy of a single case study, grounding this assertion in the introspective nature of phenomenological research. Saunders et al. (2015) propose a sample size ranging from 4 to 12, recognising the need for statistical significance while appreciating the benefits of a focused participant pool. Creswell and Poth (2018) introduce a broader range, suggesting that the number of participants in a phenomenological study may vary widely, from 1 to 325, contingent on the saturation principle borrowed from grounded theory.

The saturation principle dictates that sampling should cease when added information no longer emerges, ensuring a thorough exploration of the research focus. This aligns with the views of Morse (2015: 587), who considers saturation a "guarantee of qualitative rigour," even though it remains a concept less applicable to phenomenological research. Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocate using informational redundancy criteria to estimate sample size, suggesting that sampling should conclude when succeeding units fail to provide fresh information.

Incorporating information power principles, as proposed by Malterud et al. (2016), the present study's sample population, with higher information power, necessitated a smaller sample size. This approach aligns with the qualitative research emphasis on the depth and quality of data rather than statistical generalisability. The chosen sample size of ten participants reflects the principles advocated by Bizri (2017), Saunders et al. (2015), and Creswell and Poth (2018), providing a robust foundation

for exploring the diverse experiences of BAIEs. This approach ensures a comprehensive examination of their social reality and shared experiences across various industry sectors, contributing depth and richness to the qualitative findings of the study.

5.5 Administration and Data Collection

5.5.1 Pilot Testing and Refinement of Research Instruments

In qualitative research, conducting a pilot study is critical because it provides information not only to estimate the sample size but also to analyse all other components of the main study (e.g. research questions and objectives) (Seidman, 1998; Kim, 2010). According to Seidman (1998), a pilot study allows researchers to evaluate their research design, validate their readiness to conduct a significant study and address practical concerns. As a result, conducting a pilot study allowed the researcher of this current study to examine the methodological and practical challenges associated with investigating Black African immigrant entrepreneurship. Specifically, the pilot study was conducted for two reasons: (1) to evaluate the interview protocol and (2) to determine whether the methodological approach could be applied to explore the experiences of BAIEs. (3) The researcher sought to identify and address any additional practical problems or challenges before the main study.

There was a compelling need to separate the formal from the informal economy (Nwankwo, 2005). The separation was needed primarily to ensure participants operated in legal environments and had verifiable addresses. The informal economic sector refers to economic operations not recorded in national accounts and not governed by formal contracts, licencing, labour inspection, reporting, and taxation procedures (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 1993; Regional Trends, 2011). Many activities classified as information would be personal survival activities that earn minimal money and may be classified as sustainable employment. This argument may differ in many developing countries, where the informal sector has shown to be a formidable institution for the efficient distribution of goods and employment creation. (Fall, 1989; Ojo, 2013). However, as Morris and Pitt (1995) argue, the skills needed to operate in the sector are not necessarily those taught through the formal education system but rather those acquired through ethnic-based networks. In the UK, severe labour market disadvantages Black people face have meant that many highly qualified Black African immigrants who find it challenging to secure a paid job are increasingly drawn into the informal economy (Nwankwo, 2005).

The significance and scope of the informal economies correspond to the degree of economic marginalisation and underemployment. However, where the informal economy may encompass various illegal enterprises, it does not characterise all migrant employment opportunities and serves as

an exception rather than the rule. Welter et al. (2015) state that the informal sector comprises shadow, black, grey, and unstable economies. A study of the informal economy reveals four major commercial activities: production and construction, trading and hawking, services, and illicit activities (Morris and Pitt, 1995; Ojo et al., 2013). As a result, businesses operating within these frameworks and those without a business address were excluded from participating in this study owing to a need for more transparency in the associated activities.

The pilot study was undertaken within four weeks. Several overlapping stages were adopted during the sampling procedure, as appropriately prequalified participants were identified and included in the interviewing process. The first stage was exploratory and involved accessing various online databases, including the One Africa Network, the Black Enterprise Network, the BAME Societal Black, the Asian and Minority Ethnic Global Group, and African News Magazines. Initially, this approach aimed to identify existing businesses in the UK, contact their founders, and conduct interviews based on their entrepreneurial experiences. A purposive, non-probabilistic sampling technique was adopted for this research phase, targeting individuals who met the qualifications for participation and would yield meaningful, narrative interviews (Bryman, 2015). The pilot study's inclusion criteria included the following: the individual must be of Black African heritage; the individual must have a registered business address; the individual must have been in business for at least one year; and the individual must be a resident of West Midlands.

However, difficulties were encountered early in this sourcing procedure. The distinction between Black African and Caribbean (or another point of origin) immigrant entrepreneurs was unclear in the online databases. Selective sampling resulted in a much narrower population than initially targeted. Once individuals were purposefully classified according to their backgrounds and experiences in the UK, e-mail messages were sent, and an extended waiting period began. This early sampling period was disappointing, with only three responses received and one individual who agreed to complete the interview procedure but failed to attend on either of the scheduled administration dates.

Once it was revealed that this targeting approach was inadequate for expanding the empirical scope of this study, adaptations were made to refocus the research procedure on additional contact opportunities. Firstly, a social network comprised of work colleagues and education affiliates was used to develop a base of target contacts based on known relationships that could be used to reduce the gatekeeper effect and improve the likelihood of participation. Furthermore, family members and friends across distributed social networks and groups were recruited to reach out to potential entrepreneurs interested in supporting the study. Although initially slow, this snowballing effect

resulted in a progressive increase in participation, drawing upon leads and affiliations to gradually expand the reach and scope of the interview sample (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997; Van Meeteren, 2010). Other affiliated individuals referred four core individuals for this study to establish a sufficiently robust starting population of BAIEs, three from Nigeria (West Africa) and one from Somalia (East Africa) for the pilot study. However, through a critical synthesis of the pilot results, comparing respondent profiles, narrative storytelling, and entrepreneurial experiences revealed a substantive distinction that spanned the cross-cultural differences between Nigerian and Somalian participants. Although this cross-cultural insight could have provided a valuable comparative basis for assessing enclave-related, culturally biased characteristics, the pathway emphasis of this study indicated that limiting such cultural biases was an essential antecedent to the generalisation and representation of the responses.

5.5.2 Data Collection – Main Study

The interview process, conducted between 2020 and 2021, initiated with informal phone contacts to potential participants. This initial communication served three primary purposes: firstly, to confirm participants' adherence to UK Companies House regulatory standards, ensuring businesses had verified addresses; secondly, to facilitate pre-interview meetings crucial for building access and trust, recognising the general scepticism and unresponsiveness of BAIEs to phone calls or emails; and thirdly, to engage in an informal discussion, conveying the research topic, and mutually agreeing on the interview logistics, including the day, online video communication software, and a convenient time for the participants, following insights from Fadahunsi et al. (2000) and Nwankwo et al. (2011).

As a result, each participant received one text message introducing the author and confirming a date and time for a brief phone conversation about the research topic. Due to the stringent COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns imposed by the UK government and BCU ethical requirements for conducting research, the researcher needed help to meet with the potential participants personally. Each participant was contacted by phone following the text message; however, some were contacted directly without needing to text. Following each informal phone conversation, a research information sheet (See Appendix B) and consent form (See Appendix C) was emailed to each participant who met the inclusion criteria. Each interview was conducted once there was mutual trust between the researcher and the participants who had signed the consent form.

Through the snowballing strategy, participants were added to the interview process according to their availability, resulting in an administrative period that included several weeks of data collection from multiple participants. The result of this procedure involved ensuring that the results

could be effectively compared, thereby requiring the narratives of each participant to be sufficiently robust to warrant developmental assessment and timeline comparisons.

The interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams, a digital video suite that allowed the responses to be recorded verbatim to capture clear and irrefutable evidence of the narrative responses. This adoption of a standardised digital medium for interview administration was based upon internal requirements established by BCU ethical standards and the EU's established general data protection regulation (GDPR) regarding fair media use, cookie management, and participant tracking. People increasingly use video technologies for real-time communication, which was significantly accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Parker, 2021). By the end of March 2020, a full or partial lockdown had been implemented in over one hundred countries worldwide, affecting billions of people (BBC News, 2020). Professionals and Academics were required to comprehensively understand video technologies such as Microsoft Teams to conduct their work. Research funding and travel allowance were reduced for researchers, but Covid-19 saw the implementation of far harsher regulations (De Villiers et al., 2022). This means that future researchers will conduct more studies using video interviews facilitated by Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or other software.

Traditionalists prefer face-to-face research interviews (Parker, 2014) because visual cues improve communication, researchers can establish and keep a good rapport with participants (Fielding and Thomas, 2008), and the researcher can see the work environment of the participant (D' Urso and Rains, 2008). Krouwel et al. (2019) compared the quantity and quality of data produced by online video interviews and face-to-face interviews. The findings suggest that face-to-face interviews are only slightly greater than online video interviews regarding the amount of information shared by the participants. The authors further asserted that the difference is so minor that video call interviews could be used in some qualitative research studies due to time and resource limitations.

In this study, the potential implications of Microsoft Teams on the collection of qualitative research data were framed using the information richness theory (IRT) (Daft and Lengel, 1990; Farooq and De Villiers, 2017; Tucker and Parker, 2019; De Villiers et al., 2022). IRT is based on the idea that people can obtain information through various communication channels (e.g. Zoom and Microsoft Teams), each of which has varying degrees of information richness. According to IRT, different communication channels that can be used to conduct interviews have a greater or lesser proclivity to address research questions of varying complexity (Tucker and Parker, 2019). Information should be communicated through channels with a suitable capacity for media richness. Ineffective information communication through inappropriate means could lead to audience misunderstandings or other issues (Trevino et al., 1990). According to Daft and Lengel, the quality of a communication

channel is determined by four factors– “capacity for immediate feedback, diversity of cues, personalisation, and language variety” (Daft and Lengel, 1986: 560). Following IRT principles, the following key steps were taken to achieve information richness:

- Understanding interviewees’ body language and facial expressions helps researchers conduct more effective research. The essential features of video communication channels impact the ability to conduct effective research (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). In this study, the researcher informed the interviewees about the video communication channel (Microsoft Teams) used for the interview process. The interviewees agreed to proceed by signing the consent form. To fully understand the range of personalisation, signals, and language diversity, the respondent and the researcher had to be in visual contact (Daft and Lengel, 1986).
- The laptop computer (camera, mic, and speakers) and Microsoft Teams software were assessed before each interview to prevent technological difficulties from interfering with the video interviews.
- Using body language and facial clues can help lessen the impact of any language limitations between the researcher and participant (Daft and Lengel, 1986). In this study, correctly placing the computer webcam enabled the participants to receive immediate feedback due to the researcher's clear visibility. Using a computer with optimal functionality and a large high-resolution screen with a clear image allowed the researcher to read the participants’ facial clues and body language.
- A comfortable and noise-free setting is necessary for an effective interview (Chapple, 1999). Before beginning each interview in this study, the researcher turned off all mobile devices and posted a ‘do not disturb’ notice on the door.

The interviews were administered in 1-hour blocks (See Appendix D) over eight weeks. Each participant was presented with a standardised query and was then prompted during the interview process with the parts or focus of the question when they drifted away from answering the specific question. As this discussion progressed, the recording allowed for these overlapping prompts to be eliminated from the transcript, resulting in a complete, question-by-question presentation of the insights and responses offered by the individual participants. Each of the ten participants completed the interview procedure independently, following their agreement to the core conditions and expectations of the procedure.

Follow-Up Interviews for Enhanced Insight

Using follow-up interviews in narrative research studies provides a supplementary understanding of fundamental elements of participants' experiences concerning the subject matter. The adoption of second interviews is evident in various scholarly works such as those by Wengraf (2001), Earthy and Cronin (2008), and Riessman (2012). Based on a thematic analysis of primary interview data, two key topics highlighted in the literature on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship, namely resilience and discrimination, were identified. While not the primary focus of this study, an exploration of these issues was anticipated to provide additional illumination on the central research question, which was to explore the entrepreneurial activities of BAIEs concerning opportunity recognition and new venture creation.

To explore the topics of resilience and discrimination, a new interview guide consisting of five questions (see Appendix E) was used to further explore these themes among a sample of five participants from the initial interview. It is imperative to recollect that the total sample size (ten) consisted of six distinct industry sectors, including Retail, Information Technology, Accounting/Finance, Catering, and Robotics. Five entrepreneurs were selected for the second round of interviews, one representing each industry, except for Catering, due to the unavailability of the participants. This study analysed the industry landscape concerning the capacity of entrepreneurs to recognise opportunities and create novel business ventures. The process of tailoring the second round of interviews was executed by administrating the interview schedule, with consideration given to the data furnished by the participants during the initial interview, per Farrall's (2006) recommendation. The interviews were conducted via the Microsoft Teams platform, with scheduling based on the individual availability of each participant. The interviews were conducted within four weeks, each lasting 40 minutes. The participants demonstrated a diverse array of experiences and viewpoints concerning the topics of resilience and discrimination. The exercise mentioned above facilitated a better understanding of specific elements of the initial interview and generated fresh perspectives on identifying opportunities and establishing new business ventures.

5.6 Data Analysis

The implementation of a phenomenological research design has implications for a researcher's operationalisation procedures, encompassing data collection and analysis. This study employs semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, adopting a hybrid approach to data organisation and analysis. This approach combines the phenomenological interpretation of themes and meanings described by Van Manen (2016) and Ray and Locsin (2023) with a thematic coding strategy

that includes provisional coding corresponding to emergent themes (Saldana, 2013). Semi-structured interviews, as described by Cohen et al. (2011), provide a structured yet flexible method for data collection, allowing the exploration of themes through open-ended and probing questions. While the interviews were structured, with predetermined questions presented to participants, the order of questions was not standardised, and respondents were encouraged to discuss additional relevant topics.

Given the complex interactions among BAIEs within the urban environment of the West Midlands' multifaceted corporate and institutional environment, a hybrid approach is essential. This hybrid approach combines deductive, theoretical, top-down processes with inductive, data-driven, bottom-up procedures, following Swain's (2018) narrative. The researcher formulated a series of a priori codes, informed by interview questions, aligned with research aims and objectives, drawing from Crabtree and Miller's (1999) approach. These post-empirical codes, generated after fieldwork completion and informed by data analysis, illustrate the dual role of 'theory' as both an element of and an outcome of examining data.

The coding approach, conceptualised as a thematic funnel, draws upon techniques developed by King and Horrocks (2010), Guest et al. (2012), and Merriam (2015) to systematically analyse participants' responses. Considerations such as length, specificity, personalisation, and relevance were crucial during the process. The subsequent sections will delve into the coding process, providing a comprehensive examination starting with open coding, followed by focused coding and thematic coding. The results and findings in Chapter 6 will present selected responses with significant or highly revealing impacts, discerned based on their concurrence with categorised thematic codes and, in certain instances, their divergence from collective agreement. The initial stage involved a comprehensive examination of the subject matter, followed by a gradual focus on key findings. Subsequently, the synthesis and analysis phase facilitated further expansion of the process.

5.6.1 Open Coding

Open coding is the preliminary stage of the coding process, in which coding occurs during data collection, such as taking reflective notes during an interview, transcribing raw interview data, reading transcribed files, and labelling, bolding, and highlighting texts and texts paragraphs (Bazeley, 2021). This phase is often called content analysis, during which relevant texts are found and coded to provide valuable data relevant to the study issue (Krathwohl, 1993).

In this study, once the interviews had been completed, the results were downloaded in MP3 form and transcribed using an online transcription service called Trint. This service complies with the GDPR and applies Artificial Intelligence (AI) case processing to the navigation of complex narrative responses, eliminating many colloquial effects that cause semantic and grammatical complexity in traditional discourse and stream-of-consciousness dialogue. By eliminating pauses, non-verbal noises, utterances, and exclamations, the integrated software cleans and pre-processes the output, resulting in a bifurcated list of responses that indicate only two pathways: the interviewer and the interviewee. Where linguistic variations and uncertainties abound in migrant responses and discourse, the AI software can highlight and interject within the textual output to clarify variations or identify gaps or unintelligible responses for further data processing. The output of this automated processing was not 100% complete and consistent, requiring a side-by-side review through which the AI functionality was retrained to address linguistic variations such as semantics, accents, or colloquialisms. Manual editing of the transcript was completed in areas where the software could not process the participants' comments effectively. The researcher maintained a reflective journal in which he recorded significant connections, linkages, and queries.

Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher reviewed each one several times, highlighting relevant and emerging categories on the printed papers. Preliminary codes were developed at this stage using themes of patterns and concepts from the existing literature (Saldana, 2013).

5.6.2 Focused Coding

At this phase, the transcribed interview files were transferred into an Excel workbook (See Appendix F) to allow further post-processing of the individual responses, thereby eliminating any further linguistic gaps or inconsistencies. While colloquial slang and appropriate verbal exclamations were allowed if they contributed positively to the context or interpretation of the response, other non-verbal or unintelligible responses were extracted during this final processing phase, resulting in clean, comparable interview outputs that could then be thoroughly interpreted. By downloading these results into written transcripts and then sending them back to the interview participants, the reliability and fairness of the transcription were guaranteed, with self-edits allowed to be made during the week following each interview (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The participants were explicitly asked not to add additional information then; however, they were encouraged to revise phrases or specific words where the software analysis may have misinterpreted their comments. At this point, specific categories, including participants' background, business background, startup motivation and development, challenges, opportunities, and startup capital, were formed.

5.6.3 Thematic Coding

The process of identifying and encoding meaning patterns in primary qualitative research is called thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Thematic analysis is a highly versatile approach that can be applied to various epistemological and ontological perspectives. This approach involves identifying and organising themes that the analyst deems significant in describing the phenomenon being studied and that are often linked to a specific research question (Horrocks, 2010; Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013; Merriam, 2015).

According to King and Horrocks (2010), any qualitative analytical approach must be designed to extrapolate meaning and insight from an individual narrative and effectively compare narrative responses across the continuum of participant results. In this case, a sample of 10 BAIEs were selected for this study, resulting in a combined narrative output of thematically overlapping but empirically variable responses. Therefore, these insights and experiential narratives informed an analytical procedure that could not only draw insights from within (targeted, focused) the individual result but apply cross-sectional reasoning and comparisons to situate, interpret, and analyse the broader implications of consensus and discord across the grouped responses.

Intra-textual layering involves a review process through which thematic coding is applied to individual responses to facilitate interpretation, grouping, and comparative triangulation of the qualitative findings (Guest et al., 2012). Merriam (2015) proposes a linear approach to analytical thematic coding that progresses from a vertical, line-by-line assessment of individual responses to horizontal processing of each question. Via this approach, each participant's response to each question is reviewed independently, with key thematic elements generalised from a careful and discriminatory assessment of each line (Merriam, 2015). Although discriminatory coding is essential at this initial phase, post-codification normalisation that involves cleaning and reducing the code profiles is subsequently performed to systematically generate a frequency-based output of major and minor thematic codes. This procedure eliminates problematic themes (e.g. too specific), normalises the grammar and syntax of the responses (e.g. eliminates plurals), and groups minor themes into major thematic categories (Guest et al., 2012; Merriam, 2015). Once completed, a frequency analysis of the core thematic elements is performed, grouping themes, and counting their occurrence across the entirety of the group responses in each question.

Qualitative software, specifically NVivo, was used to facilitate analysis. NVivo is being used more frequently by researchers as a means of enhancing accuracy, facilitating generalisation to novel contexts, and managing complexity in data analysis (O'Neill, 2012). According to Ozkan (2004),

utilising NVivo for data manipulation enhances the rigour of the process. Consequently, this research involved conducting coding exercises centred around specific themes. This allowed for the organisation and concentration of analytical findings based on the interconnected thematic frequency and visual representations. According to Hutchison et al. (2010), NVivo encompasses three fundamental research process elements: data analysis, theoretical formulation, and findings presentation. The software NVivo has been employed in various qualitative case studies (Ozkan, 2004; O'Neill, 2012). Qureshi (2021) presents compelling evidence supporting the utilisation of NVivo for conducting multiple cases.

There were ten cases for this current study spanning six different industries: Retail; Information Technology (IT); Accounting/Finance; Catering; Music Production; Robotics. These industries are shown in Figure 5-1 below.

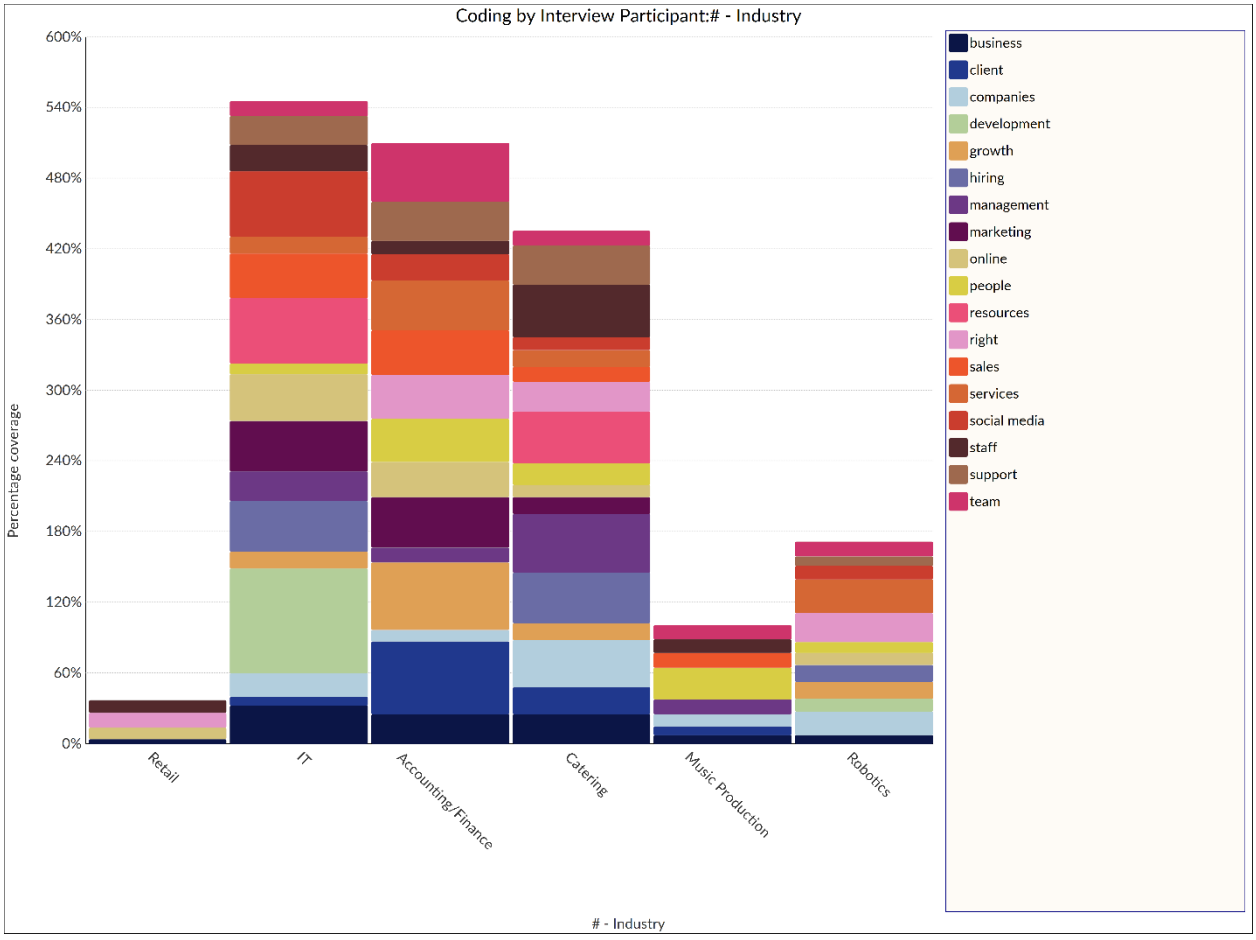

Figure 5-1: Coding of Major Themes by Industry

Using the NVivo analytical software, frequency analysis was performed at this stage of the analytical process. High-frequency words were eliminated from the coding process, and significant

thematic classification was processed via frequency reduction. Figure 5-1 separated the respondents into their respective industries and highlighted the frequency of reports related to the primary themes. BAIEs' coding category according to their industries (Retail, IT, Accounting/Finance, Catering, Music Production, and Robotics) has identified the top coding structures (Business; Client; Companies; Development; Growth; Hiring; Management; Marketing; Online; People; Resources, Right, Sales, Services, Social-Media, Staff, Support, and Team). This relationship can be visually discerned concerning the depth (e.g. the number of themes) of the industry-associated responses and the volume (e.g. frequency reported) of the thematic references. For example, Business was the most widely identified theme used robustly amongst individuals in the IT, Accounting/Finance, and Catering industries. Development, the fourth-most frequently cited theme, was observed to be significantly related to the IT industry while not reflecting at all in the Accounting or Catering industries. These findings highlight a reflective bias whereby key themes such as Marketing, Resources, and Social-Media have greater significance for industries dependent upon their contribution to their developmental process.

Finally, the researcher used the NVivo analytical software for tree mapping and categorical weighting. The central thematic elements were represented in-text by aligning codes with branch-based multi-themed nodes, as detailed in Appendix G. The study's results were reported based on identifying and extrapolating critical responses from participants. Direct participant quotes have been organised and arranged into closely related themes in the results and findings in Chapter 6, using a narrative interpretation of themes and meanings.

5.7 Ethical Considerations in Interpretivist Research

All participants were asked to complete a standardised consent form prior to the administration of the interview that outlined the focus and objectives of the study, rights and responsibilities of the participants, and the fair use policy of the information being collected. To ensure that ethical integrity was preserved throughout this study, several explicit conditions and controls were adopted during this research procedure. The following sections outline these considerations and their implementation during the interview administration and analysis of the underlying results.

5.7.1 Ethical Integrity

In the realm of interpretivist research, where the emphasis lies on the subjective rather than the objective, the pursuit of ethical integrity takes on a nuanced character. Bryman's (2015) advocacy for ethical standards becomes particularly relevant, not merely to safeguard participants' interests but as a

framework to enhance the resonance and applicability of study outcomes within similar contexts. In an interpretivist paradigm, ethical integrity is complexly woven into the fabric of the research process.

Punch's (2014) three primary control mechanisms– non-maleficence, beneficence, and fairness– take on a distinctive interpretive hue. Non-maleficence, aimed at preventing harm to participants, involves adopting querying techniques and control mechanisms that respect the subjective experiences of participants and ensure the sensitive interpretation of gathered results. This aligns with the interpretivist approach, acknowledging the subjectivity inherent in participants' perspectives (Punch, 2014).

In the context of this study, potential harm to participants is seen through the lens of subjective exposure or criticism post-study. To address this, participants are invited to engage in an informed consent process that aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, recognising their subjective realities. The commitment to informed consent includes conducting interviews anonymously, granting participants the right to exit the process at any time without consequence, and explicitly defining the study's fair use expectations for academic purposes, acknowledging the importance of participants' subjective narratives (Hammersley and Trainou, 2012).

Beneficence and fairness, within the interpretive paradigm, are intertwined with a focus on academic triangulation and theoretical comparisons derived from a nuanced, interpretive understanding of responses once compiled. This approach ensures that the study's findings are not only subjectively beneficial but also ethically fair in representing the diverse perspectives and experiences of participants. The interpretivist ethical framework, far from being a rigid set of rules, becomes a flexible and context-sensitive guide that respects and values the subjective nature of the research journey.

5.7.2 Rigour and Credibility

Adhering to the interpretivist paradigm, this phenomenological and narrative inquiry employs a comprehensive and nuanced approach to fortify rigour and credibility through key strategies in the domains of dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Dependability: Constructing Experiential Narratives

This study establishes dependability based on Guba and Lincoln's (1982) concept of thick description, prioritising transparent and logical reporting from project initiation. To capture the collective experiential narratives of BAIEs in the West Midlands, the study ensured that the prompts

and queries followed a coherent timeline, drawing insights from triggers, inciting variables, and developmental events (Ojo, 2012). Assessing the validity and accuracy of the interview guide was a critical step, involving a multi-stage process with empirical response cycles to reveal strengths and weaknesses (Kim, 2010). The research comprised two phases: the pilot and the main study (refer to Appendix H). After a critical review of the pilot study, concerns such as instrument bias, directive questioning, and researcher interference led to a restructuring of prompts in the interview guide, focusing on a positive philosophy encouraging openness and experiential insights (Maxwell, 2005).

The interview guide explored themes such as demographic information, business details, development and motivation, opportunities, challenges, employee recruiting and retention, startup capital, and future needs. Demographics set baseline indicators, framing responses for comparison across the sample population (Babbie, 2015). The revised guide focused on underlying motivations, emphasising entrepreneurial orientation and sector-level business development (Ekwulugo, 2006; Bajwa et al., 2017). Participants discussed future business opportunities and resources gained in the UK marketplace, encouraging reflection on the alignment of motivations with organisational outcomes and long-term objectives (Ojo, 2012). The juxtaposition of opportunities and challenges facilitated open discussions, leading to a positive refocusing on success from a personalised perspective and encouraging critical self and business assessment (Ojo, 2021).

In the dynamic context of phenomenological and narrative inquiry, member checks were crucial for enhancing dependability. Conducted iteratively during data collection, member checks engaged participants in reflective dialogue, validating the accuracy and authenticity of interpretations (Morse, 2015; Livari, 2017). In the narrative inquiry into the entrepreneurial journeys of BAIEs, member checks served as a constant feedback loop, refining, and validating the evolving narrative, thereby enhancing the study's dependability (Morse, 2015; Livari, 2017).

Confirmability: Weaving Narratives with Triangulation and Reflexivity

Confirmability in the context of phenomenological and narrative inquiry is reinforced through within-methods triangulation. This methodological approach, involving the use of multiple data sources, methods, theories, or researchers, enhances the credibility, validity, and reliability of study findings (Vogl et al., 2019). In this study, triangulation was employed by aligning interview findings with existing literature, grounding propositions in theoretical frameworks, and engaging with scholarly discourse (Van Manen, 2016; Vogl et al., 2019). Through a narrative inquiry, the study surpassed traditional interview methods, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted experiences of BAIEs, and significantly contributing to the confirmability of findings. Triangulation

served as a checks-and-balances system, corroborating diverse narratives, and ensuring that interpretations were rooted in the richness and diversity of the lived experiences of BAIEs within the West Midlands urban environment (Flick, 2018; Vogl et al., 2019).

In the dynamic context of narrative inquiry, continuous reflexivity further solidifies confirmability. Bracketing, a technique employed in qualitative research to counteract the impact of pre-existing assumptions or biases on the research process (Sokolowski, 2000; Tufford and Newman, 2010; Van Manen, 2016), plays a significant role. Drew (2004) defines bracketing as the identification of characteristics relevant to the researcher's engagement with the phenomenon. Gearing (2004) describes bracketing as a scientific method wherein a researcher temporarily sets aside presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or prior experiences to impartially observe and describe a phenomenon. Smith et al. (2022) emphasise the researcher's pivotal role as the primary instrument for data analysis in all stages of qualitative research exploration.

To achieve bracketing, a reflective-meditative approach, as suggested by Moustakas (1994) and Gray (2017), involves creating a framework such as memo files or reflective diaries. Reflective meditation guides the researcher's thoughts, encouraging critical and in-depth thinking and allowing them to examine or accept fresh ideas and suggestions from research participants while maintaining an unbiased perspective (Gray, 2017). Despite qualitative researchers' efforts to evaluate preconceived views through bracketing and strive for unbiased research, it is essential to recognise that every interpretation is founded on preconception (Moustakas, 1994).

The researcher for this study, being a Black African immigrant, acknowledges the potential bias resulting from personal background and connections with the Black African immigrant community. Two core questions were addressed: (1) How much does the researcher's culture influence the interviews? and (2) How can the researcher preserve objectivity while collaborating with participants to yield enhanced and effective results? Before conducting interviews, the researcher developed a hypothetical expectation of the experiences of BAIEs. Acknowledging the potential impact of biases, the researcher, as an international student from Nigeria at BCU, conscientiously endeavoured to remain impartial and transparent, demonstrating an elevated level of rigour in the research process (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Grey, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

Transferability: Interpretation and Reporting Experiences

Engaging in qualitative thematic analysis presents a multifaceted challenge, as noted by Guest et al. (2012), necessitating the interpretation of responses within a broader context and collective

consensus. To address this, the results were subdivided and benchmarked against the principal thematic codes developed for each question, enhancing transparency in the interpretive output. In line with Merriam's (2015) emphasis on critical analysis, overlapping participant insights were systematically grouped, linked, and presented comprehensively to elucidate internal consistency and cross-experiential relationships. Discriminate reporting played a pivotal role in responsible and consistent data interpretation, particularly where core observations regarding experiential departure and variation could be extrapolated through similar queries (Guest et al., 2012).

The goal of interpreting these findings was not merely to scrutinise the methodological efficacy of the research outcomes or the analysis itself but to extract significance from the narrative insights provided by BAIEs concerning their migrant journey towards business development and stability. Intra-period experiences held implications for decision analysis, influencing the assessment of successful and ineffective strategic propositions over time (Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). While ethnic consistency anticipated similar entrepreneurial activities among participants, a comparative analysis aimed to reveal narrative insights, offering clear distinctions between causal and transformative dimensions of systemic navigation. The conceptual lenses of social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional theory, were employed to discern critical dimensions related to socio-cultural referencing, conditioning, capital accumulation, and institutional influence. When applied to participants' narrative responses, the thematic overlap between these diverse lenses necessitated critical cross-comparison of varied experiences to assess internal consistency and congruency of such effects.

Each question underwent independent discussion to ensure that the reporting procedure adhered to a multi-dimensional, comparative output. The process of triangulating participant results, specifically examining critical internal relationships, was facilitated using NVivo. Once comprehensively reviewed, a triangulation of evidence through a reassessment of core themes and concepts presented in the literature review was conducted, validating, or rejecting underlying thematic claims. Ultimately, any presentation of participant responses involved selection and reduction, highlighting the most relevant statements, and eliminating responses that fell outside the scope of contributory relevance. This discriminatory approach in selection bias was mitigated through benchmarking and comparing these findings within visualisation tools and thematic groupings.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methods selected for this study. Grounded in interpretivism, the research adopts a phenomenological design and narrative

inquiry to delve into the unique narrative insights of a specific sample of BAIEs venturing into the UK marketplace. The entrepreneurs were situated in Birmingham, often recognised as the 'regional capital' of the West Midlands. Based on recent community involvement in Birmingham, it is apparent that government agencies and local support groups are placing significant emphasis on the promotion and advancement of Black-owned enterprises, as evidenced by their prioritisation of small business development. Therefore, the opportunities and challenges presented by the research participants may be considered as a microcosm of the prospective of BAIEs throughout the West Midlands region. Although each entrepreneur's story is distinct and fraught with their own set of difficulties, a common thread emerges from the responses of the study's participants that may shed light on the difficulties faced by migrant entrepreneurs when attempting to establish themselves in a Western nation such as the UK, which presents significant systemic barriers and cultural distance. The following chapter reveals the study's findings, highlighting commonalities and variations among participants. Through structured analysis, this inductive and exploratory study consolidates diverse stories and perspectives into a unified representation of entrepreneurial opportunities in a specific Western urban marketplace.

6 Chapter – Results and Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter conducts a narrative analysis of interview data gathered from ten online semi-structured interviews conducted with BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands, specifically Birmingham. Employing semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, the study sought to elicit thoughtful reflections on entrepreneurial experiences and understand how sociocultural and economic institutions shape the recognition of opportunities and the establishment of new ventures. The insights derived from these interviews are thoroughly examined through thematic analysis. Addressing research objective three (RO3), which focuses on exploring the individual experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban region, particularly in terms of opportunity recognition and new venture creation, this chapter comprises four main sections: (i) An overview of the participants' profile; (ii) The process of business idea generation and new venture creation; (iii) Factors influencing startup motivations; and (iv) The pursuit of entrepreneurial goals. Additionally, Section 6.6 delves into supplementary findings, while Section 6.7 provides a summary of the chapter.

6.2 Overview of the Participants' Profile

6.2.1 Participants' Demographic Background

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the backgrounds of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment. Chowdhury et al. (2013) posits that education, age, and experience are crucial demographic factors that significantly contribute to the success of entrepreneurial endeavours. This section also addresses demographic factors such as gender and country of origin.

All members of the sample population were immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, with four having ancestors from Nigeria, three from Ghana, one from Côte d'Ivoire, one from Sierra Leone, and the last from Guinea. This sample population included seven males and three females. According to Nwankwo (2005) and Domboka (2013), most Black African immigrant enterprises are owned and managed by men, except industries such as hair salons and cosmetics. The study did not centre on gender-specific concerns; instead, it prioritised exploring the process of advancing from opportunity recognition to new venture creations.

The entrepreneurs' ages ranged from 24 to 43. This age-based bias was anticipated, given the targeting approach adopted for this study and the emphasis on entrepreneurial status. Organisations such as the One Africa Network advocate for young entrepreneurial-minded Africans in West Midlands to overcome the array of regional challenges (e.g. lack of funding, access to resources, information availability) that have impacted the pathway from startup to successful and sustainable growth (Kabote, 2020). In targeting participants within this network, the sampling approach adopted for this study has focused on a mid-career, younger population of entrepreneurs with direct experience in regional business development. Table 6-1 highlights the entrepreneurs' backgrounds.

P/No	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Educational Level &Professional Qualifications	Length of Work Experience in Current Field	Length of Ownership Oversight of Current Business
P1	30	Female	Ghana	Bachelor's degree	6years	2years
P2	43	Male	Ghana	Master's degree & IT Course	4years	4years
P3	42	Male	Côte d'Ivoire	Bachelor's degree & IT Course	5years	3years
P4	31	Male	Guinea	Bachelor's degree & Professional Certificate	4years	2years
P5	33	Male	Ghana	Bachelor's degree & Professional Certificate	5years	2years
P6	34	Male	Sierra Leone	Master's degree & Professional Certificate	4years	1year
P7	35	Female	Nigeria	Bachelor's degree	5years	1year
P8	40	Female	Nigeria	College & Trade School	6years	4years
P9	24	Male	Nigeria	College	3years	1year
P10	32	Male	Nigeria	Bachelor's degree	2years	2year

Table 6-1: Participants' Demographic Background

The participants' education levels highlighted a highly educated sample, with seven participants having attained a university degree. With evidence from the interviews suggesting that most of the sample population had migrated for higher education purposes, this bias indicates the positive effect of the domestic educational system on business development opportunities. The participants who had not completed their degrees targeted industries (e.g. music production, catering)

where educational disadvantages would not necessarily impact client access or business development opportunities. Furthermore, three first-generation migrant entrepreneurs relocated for education, while the others relocated to join families. In other words, the pathways from developing to developed countries are often economically opportunistic, particularly when paired with educational opportunities (Ojo, 2019).

According to Sahin (2012), there is a meaningful relationship between entrepreneurial age (e.g. sector knowledge) and business life experience (e.g. work experience) and entrepreneurial success. Highlighting the role of entrepreneurial age and business life experience in shaping the entrepreneurial pursuit, nine participants indicated that they had worked in their current field for more than three years despite seven participants owning their current business for less than two years. Such findings indicate that before pursuing an entrepreneurial route, these founders gained intra-industry experience from various working pathways (e.g. employment, informal sector, internship). According to Shane (2000), prior knowledge is crucial to identifying opportunities and forming an enterprise.

6.2.2 Participants' Business Background

This section establishes the business demography of the participants. Several studies have used an industry sector approach to categorise small and large firms (Segarra et al., 2002; Segarra and Martin, 2004; Garrido, 2008b), but geography (Garrido, 2008a) and other aggregate data (Fariñas and Huergo, 2015) remain particularly important. Consequently, this current study considers the industry sector, the legal status of the enterprise, the number of staff members employed, and annual turnover. Table 6-2 illustrates these distributions.

P/No	Business Classification or Industry	Legal Status of Enterprise	Number of Staff Members Employed	Annual Turnover of Business
P1	Retail	Sole Proprietorship	Between 6-15 staffs	Between £251k-500k
P2	Information Technology	LLC	Between 16-30 staffs	Between £1mil-5mil
P3	Information Technology	S Corporation	Between 16-30 staffs	Between £1mil-5mil
P4	Accounting/Finance	Partnership	Between 6-15 staffs	Between £501k-1mil
P5	Accounting/Finance	LLC	Between 6-15 staffs	Between £501k-1mil
P6	Accounting/Finance	Partnership	Between 31-50 staffs	Between £501k-1mil

P7	Catering	LLC	Between 6-15 staffs	Between £251k-500k
P8	Catering	Sole Proprietorship	Between 2-5 staffs	Between £251k-500k
P9	Music Production	LLC	Between 2-5 staffs	Between £100k-250k
P10	Robotics	S Corporation	Between 16-30 staffs	Between £1mil-5mil

Table 6-2: Participants' Business Background

This research study targeted individuals from a variety of industries. This distribution is depicted in Table 6-2, highlighting coverage in high technologies (e.g. robotics, music, IT) and consumer-oriented (e.g. retail, catering) industries. Three participants (**P4, P5, P6**) had specialised knowledge in accounting/finance, whereas two participants (**P2, P3**) in the IT industry narrated having specialised knowledge in software development. By including representatives from knowledge-intensive industries (KIIs) and creative sectors (e.g. music, catering), a range of experiential values could be compared over this interpretive procedure. Industry choice is critical in resource appropriation and support requirements (Knatko et al., 2016; Gutierrez and D'Mello, 2019); therefore, including a multi-industry perspective was critical to highlighting variations in developmental priorities and startup behaviour. In terms of their annual turnover, there is a distribution across four distinct categories ranging from over £251K to between £1million and £5million annually. This distribution ensured that the participant results represented a diverse population with varied experiences regarding critical forces such as startup funding, growth resources, and future investment decisions.

In addition, the findings suggest that ten participants ran either a small or micro enterprise with an annual work unit of 2 to 50 employees (European Commission, 2005; Prenaj and Ismajli, 2018). Six participants narrated employing between 2 and 30 employees, while only one narrated employing between 31 and 50, which is hardly surprising given that Nwankwo (2005) and Ekwulugo (2006) assert that most Black African migrant enterprises in the UK are small, medium, or micro enterprises.

6.2.3 Participants' Generational Background

The research sample population included first- and second-generation BAIEs. The sample comprised six second-generation migrant entrepreneurs and four first-generation migrant entrepreneurs. Only one of the six second-generation migrant entrepreneurs arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker with her parents when she was six years old; the other five were born in the UK. Only one of the four first-generation migrant entrepreneurs moved to the UK before the 2009 financial

crisis in 2006; the others relocated to the UK in 2009, 2011, and 2013, respectively. Table 6-3 highlights the generational background of the participants.

P/No	First-Generation Migrant Entrepreneurs	Second-Generation Migrant Entrepreneurs
P1	Migrated to study bachelor's degree at age 17	
P2	Migrated to study master's degree at age 31	
P3	Migrated to the UK to join family at age 32	
P4		UK born/ Second generation
P5		UK born/ Second generation
P6		UK born/ Second generation
P7		Migrated to the UK as asylum seeker with parents at age 6
P8	Migrated to the UK in 2006/ First generation	
P9		Migrated to study bachelor's degree at age 25
P10		UK born/ Second generation

Table 6-3: Participants' Generational Background

Generational-specific issues were not the focus of this study; instead, the emphasis was on the experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment regarding opportunity recognition and new venture creation. However, there was a commonality in the experiential insights of first- and second-generation migrant entrepreneurs. There was a significant consensus across the sample population regarding the growth-related developmental learning curve. One of the common findings in the participant responses was that they often entered a field with significant knowledge or skills that could be applied to the execution of their role as founder. **P4**, a second-generation migrant entrepreneur, for example "*learned everything either at University or through the bank and had the certifications and licenses"* to perform his responsibilities. **P1**, a first-generation migrant entrepreneur also narrated that he had to learn in the field, often developing skills relating to "*invoicing and billing and finances"* as they arose during the startup process.

The distinctions and commonalities between first and second-generation migrant experiences in the UK marketplace are these entrepreneurs' starting vision, objectives, and goals. However, a distinction was observable in the overall participants' responses, subdividing opportunity-seeking entrepreneurs from needs-oriented or career-driven entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial processes of these entrepreneurs are critically analysed in the subsequent sections.

6.3 The Process of Business Idea Generation and New Venture Creation

This section analyses how BAIEs developed and turned their business ideas into new business ventures. The entrepreneurs responded to open-ended questions regarding the genesis of their business idea. The development of any new business venture starts with a business idea. According to Stayton and Mangematin (2019), the initial step for entrepreneurs is to generate ideas from diverse sources to establish a meticulously planned enterprise. According to Dollinger (2003) and Hechavarria and Reynolds (2009), an entrepreneur's business idea responds to a recognised issue or a perceived requirement within a given context. As a result, the themes classified under business idea generation and new venture creation include the emergence of the business idea and startup resources.

6.3.1 Emergence of the Business Idea

This section analyses how BAIEs developed their business idea and why they chose that business above others. According to the participant data, identifying a business idea was either driven by their passion, educational qualifications, or previous work/industry experience. Table 6-4 depicts how each entrepreneur found their business ideas.

P/No	Industry	Key Findings Regarding Emergence of the Business Idea		
		Passion	Education	Previous Work/Industry Experience
P1	Retail			X
P2	Information Technology		X	X
P3	Information Technology	X	X	X
P4	Accounting/Finance		X	X
P5	Accounting/Finance	X	X	X
P6	Accounting/Finance		X	X
P7	Catering	X		X
P8	Catering	X		
P9	Music Production	X		
P10	Robotics	X		X

Table 6-4: Key Findings Regarding Emergence of the Business Idea

Passion

Entrepreneurial passion is an "intense positive inclination towards entrepreneurial activities salient to an individual's identity... Passion [is not conceptualised] as a trait, but rather as an affective and motivational phenomenon that an entrepreneur experiences when engaging in identity-relevant activities" (Murnieks et al., 2016: 470).

These entrepreneurs had some form of passion for their given industry. However, retail sector entrepreneurs **(P1)** obtained their initial business idea through previous work experience. She was a clothing designer in Ghana and had lots of experience with authentic African fashion. Individuals in other industries were driven by their passion to create a new business venture. Murnieks et al. (2016) posit that a positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial passion and an individual's entrepreneurial self-efficacy, leading to a heightened inclination to initiate a new business venture. Thus, when the participants highlighted passion or industry-specific motivations, a sense of personal ownership or investment was indicated by the thematic representations of the participants. For example, **P3** indicated, concerning the IT industry, that "*this was the field I had always planned on working in…this is where the money is."* **P8** narrated that they had "*always had a passion for food",* while **P9** had "*always loved the music industry"* and is "*passionate about the quality of the songs being produced."* **P9** had always loved the idea of participating in improving the industry's innovativeness. He started his entrepreneurial journey by recording for his friends in his music studio. When probed about why he chose music production over other alternatives, he stated the following:

> *"It was never really a question. I was going to be on my own one way or another. I was not cut out for the simple office job or just sitting in a cubicle. I am a people person, and wanted to be positioned with people that would help me be successful."*

This signifies the feeling of identifying, devising, and exploring new opportunities associated with passion for innovation (Cardon et al., 2009). However, in terms of establishing a venture for commercialising and exploiting opportunities, **P10** narrated that he had *"been building technology since I was a kid… I have always admired the concept and desired to learn how to implement it myself,"* highlighting a sense of passion for founding (Cardon et al., 2009). Citing robotics as a professional foundation for his future growth, **P10** further narrated that:

> *"I wanted to do something cutting edge. There were not a lot of high-tech firms around here, and really not any robotics companies. I realised the direction that things were heading and figured out a way to monetise it."*

The above evidence suggests that establishing new ventures could be linked to the entrepreneurs' passion, which is characterised by a commitment to innovation and persistence (Cardon et al., 2013). Where passion may have framed a basis for the initial business idea, **P7** reflected that over time, her achievements went from a "*passion project to a full-blown company",* resulting in a new working dynamic that fundamentally altered the scope and demands of her business. This may be associated with a passion for development, nurturing and growing the enterprise (Cardon et al., 2009). However, as these entrepreneurs show a positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perseverance in inventing and founding passion, **P5** narrated as natural entrepreneurs; they are "*driven, focused, energised, motivated, and passionate…traits that make me a success."*

The data suggests a correlation between passion and the entrepreneurial process, as demonstrated in other studies (De Clercq et al., 2013; Cardon and Kirk, 2015). Some entrepreneurs were driven only by their passion for their industry (e.g. Music Production). Advanced educational qualifications or previous work experience were not prerequisites for market entry in such industries. However, it was evident that secondary factors played a key role. Other entrepreneurs had an additional drive to start a new venture, which stemmed from educational qualifications/skills and previous work experience in relevant sectors.

Education

These entrepreneurs achieved some form of education: college, University, or professional certification. However, those in the IT and Accounting industries possessed specialised knowledge in the related field and obtained their initial business idea through previous work experience. **P3**, for example, an entrepreneur in the Information technology industry, had studied software development. He also used some resources (databases, registries) from the University, allowing him to connect with businesses locally and across the UK. **P4**, an entrepreneur in the accounting industry, also narrated that:

> "*Everything I needed I learned either at University or through the bank; I had the certificates and the licenses, so I did not have to get anything else."*

From a developmental perspective, **P2**, another entrepreneur in the Information technology industry, reflected on the guidance provided during his educational experiences. **P2** offered the following insights regarding entrepreneurial orientation and education-driven employment opportunities:

> *"I came to the UK to attend university at >>>>>. This was the field that I was passionate about. I did not just plan on working for a gaming or software development company, I wanted to build my own service-based business model. So, I worked on the blueprint at school and was ready to launch upon graduation."*

The evidence indicates that these entrepreneurs gained knowledge, creating a suitable environment for growing strength to compete with market changes and raising self-confidence (Vineela, 2018). According to Cooper et al. (2004), education improves an individual's ability to produce innovative ideas and apply creative applications to these business ideas.

Previous Work/ Industry Experience

These entrepreneurs had previous work/industry experience. However, the Music Production entrepreneur **(P9)** obtained his initial business idea through his passion for music and innovation in the music industry, as evidenced in the preceding 'Passion section'. Experiential advantages have the potential to either support entrepreneurial progress or inhibit positive movement towards more productive, sustained solutions (Zhao et al., 2015). In assessing the influence of previous work experience on business idea generation, interestingly, **P4,** an entrepreneur in the accounting industry reflected the following:

> *"To be honest, I was tired of working at the bank for just over minimum wages. They call it a living wage, but who really lives on it? I wanted to go out on my own, and in this business, you basically just need clients to get started. So that is what I did. I found several long-term clients that would allow me to manage their finances, and then built these relationships into a business."*

Similarly, **P7** narrated that he "*needed to increase my income level…to grow somewhere where I felt like I was improving myself."* These comments are not momentary epiphanies or observations of systemic gaps. Instead, they are an acknowledgement of dissatisfaction with the existing status quo. For example, **P10** indicated that despite countless opportunities amongst high technology firms in West Midlands, he "*wanted to do something cutting edge"* and was challenged to redirect his contributions towards a self-driven, entrepreneurial solution.

For those individuals who narrated opportunity-oriented development pathways, a sense of discovery or realisation precipitated their foray into entrepreneurship. **P1**, an entrepreneur in the retail industry sector, recognised that she "*saw an opportunity to open a boutique in my*

neighbourhood." However, **P1** already had previous work experience in her home country (Ghana). She narrated that:

> *"In Ghana, I was a clothing designer. I had a small shop, and my family worked in the business. We have a lot of experience with fashion and in authentic African fashion."*

From a growth perspective, **P5**, an entrepreneur in the accounting industry, narrated that he had "*quickly realised that in order to grow in the industry* (financial planning)*, I was going to need to open my own business."*

The assessment, identification, and utilisation of entrepreneurial opportunities by an entrepreneur are significantly influenced by factors such as education, prior work experience, and specialised sector skills, as indicated by research conducted by Davidsson and Honig (2003), Corbett (2007), and Wood and Williams (2012). The present cohort of BAIEs has derived their primary business idea from their passion for their industry and educational background in relevant domains, despite being influenced by their previous work and industry experience. The study's participants opted to commence their new business ventures in domains where they possessed prior proficiency and robust customer and supplier connections. The individuals in question also exhibited traits associated with seeking opportunities, taking calculated risks, and demonstrating confidence in their abilities.

6.3.2 Start-up Resources

This section analyses the sample entrepreneurs' primary resources as they evaluate their business idea's feasibility. As per the findings of various scholars and researchers, entrepreneurs often consider initial resources as a crucial determinant while evaluating the viability of their business ideas (Santisteban and Mauricio, 2017; Block et al., 2017). To facilitate the transformation of an abstract idea into a tangible business entity, it is necessary to have resources that not only delineate the business characteristics of the organisation but also aid in the transition from concept to the physical establishment. The study's findings revealed that the participants emphasised the necessity of accessing diverse resources from multiple origins to facilitate their development. As per the participants, the resources include knowledge assets, financial resources, familial and communal connections, and institutional resources.

P/No	Industry	Key Findings Regarding Startup Resources			
		Knowledge Assets	Financial Resources	Familial and Communal Connections	Institutional Resources
P1	Retail	X	X	X	X
P2	Information Technology	X	X	X	X
P3	Information Technology	X	X	X	X
P4	Accounting/Finance	X	X		
P5	Accounting/Finance	X	X		X
P6	Accounting/Finance	X	X	X	
P7	Catering	X	X	X	X
P8	Catering		X	X	
P9	Music Production		X	X	
P10	Robotics	X	X	X	X

Table 6-5: Key Findings Regarding Startup Resources

Knowledge Assets

The acquisition of knowledge through field-based (e.g. business experience), education-based (e.g. university learning), and industry-based (e.g. strategic partners, suppliers) pathways allows entrepreneurs to springboard beyond the limitations of startup-related hurdles (Wood and Williams 2012). **P2**, **P3**, **P4**, **P5**, and **P6** are a group of entrepreneurs with academic specialisations who have pursued business ventures in industries relevant to their fields of competence. **P2**, who possesses academic knowledge in electronics and computer science, started a Software development company. **P3**, who studied software engineering, also ventured into software development. **P4, P5**, and **P6** had specialisations in accounting and had worked in the accounting industry before starting their businesses.

These participants cited their specialised knowledge, preparation, and experience as primary antecedents to overcoming the various challenges related to administrative and systemic pressures. Emphasising the critical role of educational resources, **P7** narrated that their specific knowledge resources, namely a "*degree in business administration",* allowed them to resolve various administrative responsibilities while growing their business. Highlighting the affective influence, **P3** narrated that various resources from online portals and sources of knowledge were used to build adequate opportunities to frame and establish their business:

> *"I have used some resources from the University that allowed me to connect with businesses locally and across the UK. Databases, registries, things like that. I also used web-based support services from the local government such as the SYOB (Start Your Own Business) site which outlines the how and the what in business creation. It is about combining information with capabilities to meet the expectations of the stage of maturity you are at. Things have evolved as we have grown, so I have had to acquire more resources and hire more staff."*

This participant response highlights the advantages of informational resources with the progressive maturation of the business as these firms continue to develop their foothold in the domestic market. When information is lacking, or gaps are present, **P10** narrated that they "*used various online databases and some government portals"* to assist in acquiring the information resources needed to improve developmental processes.

The evidence indicates that entrepreneurs can benefit significantly from the knowledge acquired through learned skills and formal education in relevant fields, which can serve as a valuable foundational resource. These resources represent a significant factor in achieving a competitive edge. The significance of knowledge as a crucial resource for transforming a business idea into a new venture was unsurprising for participants who operated in the information technology (P2, P3) and accounting/finance (P4, P5, P6) sectors, as revealed by the interview results. The significance of education and learned skills as resources for the growth of IT firms and operations management has been highlighted by various scholars (Zhang et al., 2012; Chuang et al., 2013; Mao et al., 2016; Vergara et al., 2016).

Financial Resources

The significance attributed to financial resources on entrepreneurship in scholarly works is evident from this study's participants emphasising its crucial role. The data consistently identified finance as a significant theme among startup resources for BAIEs in the West Midlands. **P9**, an entrepreneur in the music production industry clarification underscored the fundamental significance of financial resources:

> *"I did not have anything; I had to take everything in my bank and put it into my first sessions. Then I had to promote and sell those tracks until they hit. Then with residuals, I could keep funding the business. I borrowed some money from a loan*

shark. That cost me. Besides that, I was working outside the traditional system, I guess."

In general, this study's participants had access to various internal and external sources of finance. Despite the numerous financial challenges BAIEs face (Nwankwo, 2005), savings and family remain the critical funding sources for Black African immigrant enterprises (Domboka, 2013; Ojo, 2019). The resultant findings showed that most of these founders depended upon their savings or financial support from close sources such as family or friends to fund their businesses. **P4**, for example, *"had saved since I started working for the bank. I also went on retainer with my clients, so there was upfront money. Then, as the quarterly earnings came in, I had residual incomes that I could rely on, so I did not need outside startup capital."* Despite having a viable product after university, **P2** narrated that they still "*had to borrow from my father"* while also relying upon "*some money* (inherited) *from my grandfather's passing"* that allowed the business to grow until it was self-sustaining. Similarly, **P5** had saved money through her first employment:

"Through my first employment right after Uni, I saved money. I used that to provide a buffer for bill payments and other responsibilities while I waited for this to take off. Then I was able to rely on client retainers and commissions. It is a big shell game at first, shift funds here and then there, and then you are rolling."

P3 offered insights on the multiple sources of funding used to start and support their business during its growth period:

"I used savings and borrowed some money from relatives. I also was able to take out a personal loan at the bank because I had established credit during the time I was at university."

While personal savings may provide an essential boost to startup funding, as exemplified by **P1** in the following statement, the realisation of these developmental goals often took much greater investment from close supporters:

"I had saved money, and my parents gave me their life savings when we left Ghana and came to the UK. Then I was able to use a lot of the materials that I brought with me to get things up and running. I did not really need additional funds, just the first month's rent and security deposit to get the store open. I have used bank credit to improve the store, invest in marketing, and build signage in recent years."

When weighing the influence of clients on startup financial capital, **P8** narrated that *"I did not need startup capital at first. I had to buy the first products to meet a week's worth of orders for one client. But once that was done, I was able to turn those profits into funding for the next week, and then it just grew from there. I was living off my savings for about a month, and then I could afford to pay a small salary."*

One of the significant gaps in the responses by these participants was the need for more traditional funding for these startup enterprises (e.g. bank loans). However, once these entrepreneurs were established, access to more traditional capital resources such as bank loans was possible, with **P2** narrating that they "*have used bank credit to improve the store, invest in marketing, and build signage in recent years."* **P9** narrated "*borrowing some money from a loan shark"* to get started, a decision that paid off once the business thrived. Subsequent development, however, is forecasted to require a more significant scale engagement of investors and venture capital, as represented by **P3**, who will seek to "*expand our resources"* through "*investment such as venture capital."* Across most of the other startups, however, the future of development was narrated as a self-supporting, self-sustaining initiative that could address financial limitations and stimulate accelerated growth.

Based on the data, the predominant funding source for startups was personal savings. According to the participants' accounts, saving played a crucial role in facilitating the process of moving from a mere idea to an actualised business venture. The savings were obtained from post-employment savings, inheritances, or personal gifts, including those transferred by parents. When supplementary funding was necessary, entrepreneurs turned to informal borrowing channels, initially prioritising reliable sources such as family and friends and subsequently exploring peripheral borrowing options such as loan sharks and commercial associates. Entrepreneurs considered bank and institutional funding a last option, as they had adequate funds associated with their current income streams or anticipated earnings from previous clients.

Familial and Communal Connections

The significance of familial and communal ties as valuable assets for entrepreneurs in establishing new business ventures has been emphasised by Ojo (2012) and Hu and Zhang (2021). These connections are consistently present in entrepreneurs' networks worldwide, as Anderson et al. (2005) and Drakopoulou et al. (2002) noted. Overall, the participants of this study exhibited familial and communal ties that served as a means of accessing resources for their entrepreneurial endeavours. **P1** highlighted the strong influence of family support on the mobility of the new venture creation. He narrated that:

> *"I had saved money, and my parents gave me their life savings when we left Ghana and came to the UK. Then I was able to use a lot of the materials that I brought with me to get things up and running. I did not really need additional funds, just the first month's rent and security deposit to get the store open. I have used bank credit to improve the store, invest in marketing, and build signage in recent years."*

Similarly, **P2** narrated that *"I borrowed from my father. I also had some money from my grandfather's passing, so I used that to keep afloat until the sales came in."* **P3** also narrated, "*I used savings and borrowed some money from relatives."* **P7** highlighted that she had a passion for cooking and initially did not start her business for money. However, when there was high demand for her food/catering services, *"my husband and I agreed that I could appropriate some of our savings to grow quickly. I needed those funds for the equipment and raw materials, but soon, the orders replaced what was spent."*

From a networking perspective, familial and communal connections were often used to create inroads into the market, develop critical commercial relationships, or engage the founder in valuable or direct network opportunities to build the business. **P1**, for example, narrated the links to various connections that supported the business development process:

> *"Mostly it is just family and friends. I also rely a lot on the community. They are the backbone for this type of boutique store. It is all pretty informal. The coaching I received at ACH and recently through ScaleUp has been essential too. I am also supported by my bank, I guess."*

Similarly, **P9** narrated that they *"had many friends that wanted to record, and if we had a space to work out of, I figured that we could get stuff out into the field."* However, where commercial connections were leveraged, as evidenced by **P10** in the following statement, there was a general leap of faith or commitment to the individual and their vision that needed to be made prior to the investment or purchase:

> *"Our first capital infusion came from our first client. Basically, it was a pay for design solution that allowed us to get moving. After that, we were flowing from project to project, cannibalising the funds until we were profitable. Then salaries could be paid."*

When such relationships were lacking, these founders reminded that they could rely upon people in their lives that would build network solutions or drive connections within the community, such as **P7**, who narrated the following when such relationships were lacking, these founders

reminded that they could rely upon people in their lives that would build network solutions or drive connections within the community, such as **P7** who narrated the following:

> *"There is always great support from home. There is a lot of community support too. Kids know me and are always looking for a sweet treat. I collaborate with my friends, and that keeps things light and fun."*

Where participants did not receive financial support or network connections from familial and communal connections, the family provided emotional support. For example, **P6** narrated that "*there is emotional support, but nothing financial."* This type of support was narrated as valuable because it "*keeps me grounded and focused on things beyond the workplace"* (**P6**), suggesting that there are divisions between extrinsic financial support and the intrinsic socio-emotional support needed to develop a successful business. Highlighting the sustaining value of social support, **P10** narrated that *"The people in my life have been so supportive and committed to our goals. Having people believe in you so openly and honestly is a powerful feeling."* Where individuals felt alone or challenged by the daunting task of business development, **P8** reflected that "*emotional support is pretty important",* citing her mom as her "*biggest supporter"* and suggesting that the staff and crew within their business were critical to sustaining such focus and network connections.

The data indicate that family support benefits the financial, emotional, and psychological well-being of these entrepreneurs during the entrepreneurial process. The study also highlights family encouragement and guidance, which were significant in the entrepreneurial process. Community connection was crucial in promoting stability and growth for these entrepreneurs, providing them with vital human resources, social capital, and financial contributions.

Institutional Resources

Institutional resources are the second type of information resources. These institutions or organisations gather, process, and disseminate information to end users. Institutional resources include online databases, government portals, libraries, publishing houses, electronic archive media centres, and many others.

In this study, the participants cited a range of government, public, and private-sector resources concerning their developmental processes. **P7**, for example, suggested that they were "*constantly using online data and government resources to help with the paperwork side of things."* Similarly, **P10** indicated they have "*used various online databases and some government portals to assess business startup tax considerations and consequences."* Participants cited other

institutions, such as Ashley Community Housing (ACH), as intermediary service providers who had the "*experience and recommendations"* **(P1)** to facilitate the transition from concept to a formal enterprise. ScaleUp Institute, according to **P1,** was also used as a developmental resource to improve knowledge and awareness of various procedural opportunities and resource networks**.**

Although the participant responses regarding government services and support were positive from a general perspective, there was a definite sense that these resources were indirect and were based upon an informal systemic relationship in entrepreneurial development. **P3** narrated that "*there are a lot of online resources and channels that you can use to learn about parts of the business, like taxes and filing fees and forms that are critical to starting a business."* Similarly, **P5** indicated, "*I relied a lot on government websites and Google searches to figure out the business side's minutia, and then there were the regular filings and tax issues that took more time, and I had to reach out to experts."* When drawing upon services more directly, **P2** narrated the following experience:

> *"There is a programme for entrepreneurs, it is a grant programme that supports startups directly from the local administration. It involves applying and presenting your idea or business plan to a panel of judges. Only a few grants are awarded each year. There are also other national programmes for which you can apply. The issue is that they are looking for experience or prior successes, which are difficult to show when you are just starting out."*

While such grant programmes may offer an initial opportunity to fund startups, through local support programmes, **P1** argued that "*it is impossible to get if you do not already have something established; you have to show the initiative to be considered."* Further, **P3** recognised that there are ethnically oriented programmes such as "*Black small business networks and growth hubs that cater to migrant entrepreneurs who need additional knowledge and support."* These targeted programmes are designed to elevate the options afforded to ethnically diverse entrepreneurs and include:

> *"The ACH a non-profit organisation that is focused on overcoming stereotypes against ethnic migrants in the UK and supporting small business development. They offer direct support to aspiring business owners with a variety of services such as form filling and funding. They also have trainings and meet-ups that get people together and help you recognise that this is not a vacuum, you are part of something bigger, something growing."*

The data revealed that BAIEs effectively leveraged private and public services to acquire valuable industry insights, competitive intelligence, and government-related information. Regarding industry information, each business entity can be categorised under at least one industry and associated with an organisation that can provide valuable business information (e.g. ACH). Regarding competitive intelligence, every enterprise has rivals; acquiring knowledge about them is crucial. These entrepreneurs acquired competitive intelligence regarding their business environment by utilising search engines such as Google. Additionally, the government offers substantial information beneficial to small enterprises, a sizeable portion accessible online. These entrepreneurs used online platforms (e.g. GOV.UK) to file taxes and gain information about legal and regulatory developments.

6.3.3 Administrative Challenges and Overcoming Strategies in New Venture Creation

To attain success in new venture creation, entrepreneurs must possess a level of administrative proficiency encompassing fundamental duties such as managing payroll, overseeing human resources, and establishing operating systems (McAdam and Marlow, 2007; Hu et al., 2021). This section analyses the administrative challenges encountered by the participants and the strategies they employed to establish a new enterprise using the resources analysed in Section 6.3. These entrepreneurs face administrative pressure to establish themselves in the marketplace, as shown in Table 6.6. It is interesting to see the array of strategies to overcome these challenges.

P/No	**Industry**	**Key Findings Regarding Administrative Challenges in New Venture Creation**
		Administrative Pressures
P1	Retail	X
P2	Information Technology	X
P3	Information Technology	X
P4	Accounting/Finance	X
P5	Accounting/Finance	X
P6	Accounting/Finance	X
P7	Catering	X
P8	Catering	X
P9	Music Production	X
P10	Robotics	X

Table 6-6: Key Findings Regarding Administrative Challenges in New Venture Creation

Administrative Pressures

The administrative responsibilities imposed upon the startup founder were central to the participant results. Expectations to manage physical, human, and technical resources make managerial responsibility a significant challenge. For example, **P2** narrated that "*the most challenging part is the administrative side of the business"*, citing difficulties in "*getting everything accomplished"* and "*finding the resources I needed to achieve my goals",* including both "*human and physical resources."* Other administrative considerations, such as "*trying to negotiate contracts"* **(P6)**, were identified as procedural challenges as the respondents learned the difference between their creative vision and the real-world responsibilities of business administration. **P4** narrated that one of the most critical stages of the business development process was "*understanding legal precedence and following rules and guidelines rigorously all the time"* to frame a legitimate enterprise that the market could support and grow without legal disruptions. Where administrative gaps were too significant, then **P3** narrated those transitional initiatives:

> *"Meant hiring staff and bring on new people to make things happen. It also meant that I had to weigh other areas where I could cut back and automate. So, I used software and accounting resources to make things easier."*

There were direct and indirect opportunities for various connections (previous work or personal contacts) and their contribution to new venture success. For example, where **P4** relied on "*new clients in friends and family members"* to build their financial business, **P5** indicated that they had "*relied pretty heavily on my previous firm to get established, to earn income, and to build up my status in the community."* **P7** narrated, "*There was that initial client, that one business that I could not have done this without."* Similarly, in the music industry, **P9** narrated that "*two clients…are the reason we have grown the way we are now",* opening the business to other interests and investments.
Further, **P7** narrated they have "*a very strong team of all women; they are also from Nigeria…we are like a sisterhood and work together really well."* Due to this solid socio-cultural linkage, **P7** also highlighted that this is a "*community business"* perpetuated by localised relationships.

Outsourcing or alternative partner resources were also cited where such network connections cannot be made, creating a multi-phase, multi-strategy pathway from static to dynamic business solution-finding. **P10** narrated that they "*had to outsource the Human Resource Management (HRM) side of things to a local service provider to make sure that I was not missing anything"*, creating a developmental bridge to assist when specific capabilities or resources were lacking. **P9** recognised that "*it is a day-to-day grind…we are building relationships with people and striving to grow*

partnerships." In contrast, **P6** argued that despite various connections and network links in their industry, they "*had not relied upon many outside resources,"* instead using various "*websites and search forums"* to address the administrative needs of the business. Reflecting on the procedural effects of multiple connective pathways, **P1** offered the following insight:

> *"There were two major opportunities. The first was finding the right space. For me, high traffic and customer exposure was essential. Second, there was my relationship with >>>> and the ACH. Her experience and recommendations were key to guiding me along the path of setting up the business and getting my store established in the community."*

Such connections to **P1** included various "*local programmes such as the counselling initiatives at ACH"* alongside other non-profit services such as "*the ScaleUp initiative that offered some great advice when I was looking to expand."* These facilities and programmes bridge the gap between information asymmetries and inexperience, transferring essential knowledge to founders who would otherwise be confronted with gas and uncertainties.

Extending this concept of connective opportunities into the private sector, **P2** narrated that "*we also had to build our social media and find our local niche. So, it was about finding strategic partners to help us grow and then expanding from there.*" Once attained, **P2** indicated that these strategic partners "*expedited our growth and helped us to enter the market more successfully and strategically."* Further, **P6** narrated using "*traditional sites such as CareerBuilder or Monster and posts on social media and LinkedIn"* to recruit professionals with specific skills (*e.g. sales, service, administration, advertising*). There was consensus across the resultant findings that despite growth aspirations, these teams were kept relatively small, with only as many people recruited or hired as needed in the immediacy. For example, **P8** described a snowballing growth effect that resulted in a gradual expansion of the staff:

> *"I hired staff for various positions throughout the company. For example, I was using a delivery service, but then I realised that with a dedicated vehicle we could cut costs and do the deliveries on our own. Now we have three vehicles, three drivers, and one driver supervisor. I also have sales staff to take orders and to connect with local businesses. Then I have an accountant and a marketing director. Besides that, we have the meat of the catering sandwich, per se, in our chefs and production staff."*

This evidence indicates that strategic partners, including suppliers, initial clients, or partners, ensured these entrepreneurs had sufficient resources and directional stimulus to accelerate and sustain their developmental arc.

6.4 Factors Influencing Startup Motivations

This section analyses the motivating factors that led BAIEs to transform their business concepts into new business ventures. The scholarly literature provides ample evidence that various environmental factors, encompassing historical, regional, ethnic, social, cultural, economic, legal, and political dimensions, can drive entrepreneurial activity, including establishing new business ventures (Dollinger, 2003; Hechavarria and Reynolds, 2009). During the semi-structured interviews, entrepreneurs responded to the primary motivators and incentives that prompted them to establish and operate their respective businesses. Table 6-7 shows the factors that drove BAIEs to initiate a startup, including self-actualisation, income prospects, competitive advantage/market demand, job dissatisfaction, and family background.

P/No	Industry	Key Findings Regarding Startup Motivations				
		Self-actualisation	Income Prospects	Competitive Advantage/ Market Demand	Job Dissatisfaction	Family Background
P1	Retail		X	X		X
P2	Information Technology	X		X		
P3	Information Technology					X
P4	Accounting/Finance	X	X		X	
P5	Accounting/Finance	X		X		X
P6	Accounting/Finance		X		X	
P7	Catering	X		X		
P8	Catering	X		X		X
P9	Music Production			X		X
P10	Robotics		X	X		

Table 6-7: Key Findings Regarding Startup Motivations

Self-actualisation

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) posits that individuals seek job satisfaction through motivators, focusing on the pursuit of self-actualisation and achievement rather than the avoidance of dissatisfaction. Delmar (1996) supports this perspective, emphasising that entrepreneurs who perceive a connection between their conduct or traits and the achievement of objectives are in line with Herzberg's motivators. The entrepreneurial drive for accomplishment, as outlined by Herzberg's theory, is considered a powerful motivator contributing to enhanced entrepreneurial quality, potentially leading to higher job satisfaction among entrepreneurs as they navigate the challenges of business ownership.

Entrepreneurs are driven by a sense of accountability, which not only motivates but also sustains their energy and passion for delivering results. This accountability puts pressure on individuals to effectively manage and reconcile the various elements of the business administration process. This may push creative and visionary professionals outside their comfort zones, creating additional challenges that inhibit productivity and efficiency. However, despite a potentially valuable vision, **P2** narrated that "*from the first day, I was behind in business management,"* suggesting that a lack of skills and knowledge demanded accelerated responses to the pressure of startup activities. While such developmental pressures represented a critical challenge in the process of startup formalisation, as exemplified by **P5**, pressure as experienced by these respondents was often the result of self-doubt and uncertainty, particularly as the various elements of the startup were being defined over time:

> *"First, how do you attract clients? Especially people that want to give you their money? It is hard if you don't have a strong reputation and legitimate storefront in the community. So that was the first thing. Then there is the issue of operating income. How do you keep your life and business afloat during the early stages? How can you build and grow if you are needing to take an income to be stable financially?"*

Whereas the pressure associated with self-actualisation involved personal concerns regarding developmental priorities and growth opportunities, this response suggested that unanswered questions might derail the focus and direction adopted by the founder as they frame their business. For example, **P4** narrated that if the business turned downwards, "*I am on my own for income and may be liable for some losses as well if I do not protect myself legally."* Similarly, **P8** narrated that "*in the beginning, you are very alone, you feel that you are the only thing holding yourself up, and you struggle to build that identity",* reducing the support and productive contributions from other strategic

partners. As there "*are no buffers, no outside support for the most part"* **(P8)**, there is a self-actualising pressure that drives these founders towards either goal-realisation or failure.

According to the findings, self-actualisation has a favourable and considerable impact on the entrepreneurial process of BAIEs. These entrepreneurs create new business ventures in direct proportion to the degree of their entrepreneurial drive. This association is influential because initiative-taking entrepreneurs see their enterprises as a means for self-actualisation.

Income Prospects

For some of these entrepreneurs, the pathway to business development could have been more linear and required early engagement in other industries or responsibilities before opportunities were realised. For example, **P1** narrated that following their move to the UK, they realised that although it would be challenging to set up their retail boutique, it was "*better for myself than to be working for someone for base wages."* Similarly, **P4** narrated, "*Like I said, I did not want to work for a base wage anymore. I wanted to control my earning potential; the only way to do that was to set up my own office. Now I can recoup returns from client gains and not worry about my general salary level."* Where business opportunities and higher income were anticipated to grow over time in the industry, **P6**, an entrepreneur in the Accounting/Finance industry, highlighted that:

> *"It is pretty much a natural progression for this career path. You start somewhere small, or you work your way to a standstill in the corporate world like I did. Then you figure out that there are opportunities for growth beyond the traditional grind. So, you get motivated to look outside of this path you are grinding out. I needed to increase my income level. I need to grow somewhere where I feel like I was improving myself. It is a strange and difficult path, but I had to tackle the challenge."*

P10 narrated how their thought process stimulated their drive to pursue entrepreneurship. They experienced an inner motivation to initiate a small enterprise and subsequently scale it up proactively:

> *"The industry here was slow-moving and dull. I wanted to get out ahead of things, and I had some money saved from working through college, so I could start small and expand. I got my first contract locally with a security services company and could go full-time alone."*

The entrepreneurs were driven to pursue entrepreneurship to gain control over their earning potential and generate more income. Most of the participants held long-term employment positions. The participants were motivated to pursue entrepreneurship to ensure a stable and secure future.

Competitive Advantage/ Market Demand

One of the core advantages of entering competitive markets is that there is motivation to succeed based upon benchmarking and comparing other businesses and their successes or failures. For example, **P1** reflected that business development is about "*building community partnerships and relationships to improve your ability to succeed even when things are difficult."* She further narrated the following transition into retail sales:

> *"After moving to the UK, I saw an opportunity to open a boutique in my neighbourhood. There were other chain shops, but not anything selling artisan designs and native fashions. I felt like even though it would be a challenge to get set up, it was better for me to be in business for myself than to be working for someone for base wages."*

P8 offered the following insights regarding the opportunity effects motivating her culinary enterprise:

> *"When I graduated culinary school, my first stop was the restaurant industry. I realised that a lot of local companies wanted a nutritious, on-demand food source, but your average restaurant is not set up for daily catering. So, I started doing some research and figured out that I could not only make a serious income off catering alone, but I could grow a real business on local businesses alone. It was a natural transition after that."*

In a similar vein, **P10** observed that there was a significant gap in the robotics industry that someone could fill with the knowledge and drive to contribute new, innovative technologies to the regional industry:

> *"I wanted to do something cutting edge. There were not a lot of high-tech firms around here, and not any robotics companies. I realised the direction that things were heading and figured out a way to monetise it."*

Beyond her passion for the industry, **P7** narrated that *"I realised that I had a real business growing, and my demand started to grow beyond my small home kitchen. I had to expand to remain in business, so that meant finding commercial space, hiring staff, and developing new."* **P9** offer similar insights, narrating that he *"had a lot of friends that wanted to record and if we had a space to work out of, I figured that we could get stuff out into the field."* Where these entrepreneurs found a competitive edge in the market, **P2** narrated that *"I graduated university with a natural passion for self-employment and building my own business. I did not like what I saw in other companies. Their models were tired, and their tech was not exciting. So, I decided that I could build my own company from the ground up and get ahead of the game, so to speak. I needed an outlet for my ideas, and so my own business offered that opportunity."* **P5** also offered similar insights narrating that:

> *"If you throw a dart in this town, you are going to hit a financial planner or investment banker or accountant. I figured that I could start something innovative and build off sustainable investments. So, I started talking to my existing clients about an investment programme that would guide them towards only sustainable companies. They were excited. I got excited. It is the old do well by doing good adage. My first three clients were up in profits, and word of mouth expanded from there."*

These entrepreneurs had a market demand for their products. Some of these markets were mainstream (such as **P5**, which operates in the Accounting/Finance industry) and ethnic markets (such as **P1**, which sells African fabrics). The competitive advantage was both the niche products offered and an advantage to bring innovation into the given industry.

Job Dissatisfaction

Discontent with their previous work motivated some entrepreneurs to create new business ventures. **P4**, an entrepreneur in the Accounting/Finance sector, narrated that his primary motivation to initiate his enterprise stemmed from dissatisfaction in his previous job:

> *"To be honest, I was tired of working at the bank for just over minimum wages. They call it a living wage, but who really lives on it? I wanted to go out on my own, and in this business, you basically just need clients to get started. So that is what I did. I found several long-term clients that would allow me to manage their finances, and then built these relationships into a business."*

P6, another entrepreneur in the Accounting/Finance industry, said, *"Anytime you can connect deeply with someone on a professional level, you have an opportunity for business development."* He

also had some early phase opportunities from his employer, such as training, certification, and licenses, but there was no scope for his ideas, and he tried to figure out where he fits. Due to these factors, the individual in question decided to resign from their employment and establish their enterprise:

> *"There is a saying that if you do not like the way it's done, then do it yourself. That is pretty much every day in this industry. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out where I fit. What is a career path about if it is not self-actualisation and growth? I was scared at first. I can admit that now. I wanted to have satisfied clients. I wanted people to trust me. So, I just had to take a risk and walk this path."*

This group of entrepreneurs' primary motivation was their discontent with their previous employment experiences. The situation was described in various manners by the individuals. **P4** discussed the potential for their work to have received greater recognition, while there was a restriction for **P6** to develop their ideas beyond the scope of their employer. The individuals' job discontentment prompted them to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Family Background

One of the similarities that spanned the participant results was a narrative account of overcoming family history or preserving a family legacy that transcended the bigger picture of the stereotype of refugee, migrant, minority, or poverty. For example, **P2** narrated that they have relied upon the "*support of friends and family"* to encourage brand and product development and "*make a good life for my family"* because "*this is where the money is right now."* Similarly, **P8** narrated, "*My mom is my biggest supporter, and we talk on the phone at least once a week."* Focusing on the motivational efforts to change the path of development, **P3** and **P9** offered the following insights:

> ***P3:*** *"As a boy, I watched my father work the fields near our home. I saw him grow old. He was miserable. When I came to the UK, I committed to something different, to being my own boss. I was not going to work for someone else. It is extremely hard to follow that path, but I was driven, and I had a product that I knew businesses could use, so it made moving forward easier."*

> ***P9:*** *"I did not grow up with anything. We were so incredibly poor. I wanted to be able to send money home to my parents. I wanted to change the cycle of my ancestry and really push towards long-term financial success. So, I took risks; I came to the UK, hit the pavement, and started pressing."*

In fact, **P1**, **P5**, and **P8** all indicated some form of family effect on their industry selection decision. For example, **P8** reflected that cooking and catering was "*in my blood from birth"*, leveraging a university scholarship programme into a long-term career. Similarly, **P1** indicated that in her hometown in Ghana, she had a *"small shop, and her family worked in the business"* that centred her in the textiles industry, but once arriving in the UK, she "*wanted to be able to sell some of my own designs"* motivating her towards her own space and her own facility for sales and distribution of artisan clothing. **P5** reflected that:

> *"I suppose watching my parents struggle through their retirement years was motivation enough. But I also had some inspiration from teachers at school and then at university. I was fixated on numbers and the stock market."*

The entrepreneurs were motivated by their familial background. Some entrepreneurs were introduced to business during their formative years and had previously operated a comparable enterprise alongside their parents before starting their entrepreneurial venture. Others were driven to initiate a business enterprise due to their disadvantaged/poor familial circumstances. The individuals expressed a desire to generate sufficient income to provide for the needs of their respective families.

6.5 The Pursuit of Entrepreneurial Goals

The final question in this interview asked the participants to narrate their entrepreneurial goals, considering human or physical resources and their potential impact on long-term organisational goals. While the range of developmental strategies and objectives was similar, it was evident that situational and contextual forces play a role in determining long-term goals and opportunities. From idea generation to long-term goals, the sub-themes identified under entrepreneurial goals included two core domains: development and diversification, as shown in Table 6-8.

P/No	Industry	Key Findings Regarding Entrepreneurial Goals	
		Business Development	Business Diversification
P1	Retail	X	X
P2	Information Technology		X
P3	Information Technology	X	X
P4	Accounting/Finance		
P5	Accounting/Finance	X	
P6	Accounting/Finance	X	
P7	Catering	X	

P8	Catering	X	
P9	Music Production	X	X
P10	Robotics	X	X

Table 6-8: Key Findings Regarding Entrepreneurial Goals

Business Development

There is an expectation regarding developmental progress and business achievement that leverages an existing long-term vision and translates it into a sustainable, pragmatic business model. Despite the vision for the startup, the capture of various resource streams, and the development of administrative inroads, the capacity to grow and develop these businesses was limited by various challenges, including client development, strategic partners, and finance. Insights from two of the participants suggested that stage-based growth required progressive evolution from a smaller, initial scale to a larger, legitimate enterprise:

> ***P5****: "There was a slow start effect that delayed the progress from idea to fully functioning business. There was also the growth impact which meant that my scope of client acquisition was negatively impacted by the rate of development."*

> ***P1****: "The first challenge was trying to attract sellers and get merchandise. I could not do it alone, and I couldn't buy everything upfront. I had to find local artisans or people online willing to take some risk with me and put their products out there for sale."*

For small companies, challenges such as the "*lack of brand recognition or the issue of trust between clients and our services"* **(P6)** created barriers to market entry, particularly in established environments where brands and competitors were already firmly positioned. Alternatively, there was an acceleration hurdle which **P7** identified as the concept of small-scale morphed into a much larger, much more dynamic opportunity:

> *"This went from a passion project to a full-blown company in less than two months. It was challenging. I lost my time at home. I lost track of the other things I was going to do with my life. It really is all-consuming. So, demand, time, pressure, all of these are challenges."*

Despite such accelerated development rates, **P10** narrated that "*it is always about keeping the momentum going",* allowing founders to move forward to a point where they are no longer "*working*

from behind." As a form of a developmental "*grind"* **(P9)** suggested that startups are tasked with "*continuing to build new relationships, find new talent, keeping reliable people,"* effectively accelerating growth to a point where it is self-sustaining despite other hurdles encountered during the developmental process. **P9** further cited expanding into "*a larger studio"*, while **P7** suggested that they might "*expand into another building or more equipment or a night shift."* **P1** offered the following business-relevant insights:

> *"I have thought about a third location. I have also thought about expanding into fashion design and looking at building my brand in that sector, not just as an artisan shop. I am just continuing to move forward, so yes, we will probably need more funding, more industry knowledge, partnerships, and other opportunities to grow over the long term."*

These plans reflected a developmental arc that is persistently broader but not significantly distinctive. **P3** offered the following to highlight the considerations associated with such processes:

> *"To grow long term, however, we are going to need some form of investment such as venture capital or strategic partnership. We are going to have to continue to expand our resources to make the most out of the sales volume that we are continuing to achieve and the cost structure that we must keep up with."*

Due to this approach to development, the justification for resource expansion was primarily based on transforming existing facilities and capabilities through broader investment in capacity. **P5** viewed such expansionary opportunities as a "*justified"* investment, where they needed to "*continue to keep costs down and reduce out-of-pocket expenses*." This pressure to limit costs was widespread in the participant responses. For example, in the following statement, **P8** recognises the possibility of expanding but is unwilling to commit to a fundamental transformation of existing capabilities:

> *"We are looking at a second facility. I am still not sold on it, but if we could get closer to some of our larger clients, it would cut down on logistical issues and improve our delivery efficiency. That would mean more staff, more funding, more contracts for ingredients."*

The data indicate that these entrepreneurs intended to develop and expand their businesses. They were bent on transforming existing facilities and capabilities through broader investment in capacity. These entrepreneurs actively sought out additional opportunities to generate greater profits.

Business Diversification

For change to be more disruptive, it was evident that these founders needed to commit to a much more dynamic and innovative strategy, whether it remained anchored to their current growth arc or diversified their business over the long term. **P3**, for example, narrated that over the long term, to continue to grow, they would "*need some form of investment such as venture capital or strategic partnership"* to expand beyond their sales-based limitations. Similarly, **P2** observed the following regarding team building and diversification:

> *"To continue to expand, we are going to need to build our teams and develop new links between future products and our existing client base. This means more innovation and more investment in development and design. There are also sales opportunities and build-up marketing strategies that we are going to need to implement."*

The participants unexpectedly narrated a specific constraint between future growth opportunities and funding solutions. **P1** indicated that "*we will probably need more funding, more industry knowledge, partnerships, and other opportunities"* to facilitate long-term growth. Furthermore, **P10** observed the following concerning significantly expanding their company into a viable, growth-oriented solution:

> *"We are going to be taking on investors in the future as we expand. My goal is to go public in 3 years, and at this rate, it will be a reality. It is going to take additional investment and scaling to achieve, but it is going to happen."*

Over time, these entrepreneurs were confronted with various barriers related to expansion and diversification that required the retention of skilled employees and targeting alternative staff members that could assist in meeting the long-term growth objectives. Highlighting the persistence of this dynamic recruiting strategy, **P9** reflected that:

> "*I am always searching for new talent…connecting with people and figuring out how their skills are going to help your business platform."*

Whereas **P10** cited the need for "*intelligent people"* with specialised skills in the tech industry, they also suggested that these recruits must be growth-oriented and "*passionate about future technologies."* Identifying such individuals requires not only building internal capabilities but recruiting individuals who can "*make a difference and bring them on board"* **(P10)** according to the iterative stage of the business. These future-oriented agendas align with long-term growth capacity

and existing organisational capabilities as these firms seek to solidify their position in the West Midlands, across the UK, and beyond.

6.6 Supplementary Findings

The main aim of this section was to provide additional helpful information that supports and supplements the primary research, which explored the entrepreneurial activities of BAIEs as they progressed from opportunity recognition to new venture creation in an urban environment within the West Midlands. This section focuses on emerging issues/topics not fully addressed in the primary research. These issues include resilience and stereotyping/discrimination, as shown in Table 6-9.

P/No	Industry	Supplementary Findings	
		Stereotyping/Discrimination	Resilience
P1	Retail	X	X
P3	Information Technology	X	
P4	Accounting/Finance	X	X
P9	Music Production	X	X
P10	Robotics	X	X

Table 6-9: Supplementary Findings

Stereotyping/Discrimination

Although this topic was difficult for several of the participants to discuss, there was consensus throughout the participant responses that there are strong stereotypes in the West Midlands against open participation of African migrants within the broader economic sphere of white, British society. **P10** vocalised this experience as follows:

> *"I built a portfolio and walked into a variety of larger businesses to present my work to marketing teams and design managers. I had gotten through the door with the quality of my work, but the minute they met me, it was like I was standing in the shadows. I could see faces twist up in disappointment. I could see false smiles twist into condescension. I could feel judgement in every room. When I met my first large corporate client, I learned that they had experience working with African immigrants in the past and they employed a population of Nigerians and Ghanese that made them*

more sympathetic. I felt like I was biting my tongue at every meeting, but perseverance paid off."

This narrative highlights the initial proclivity towards stereotyping and discrimination based on Black African status, and immigrant status. While it was expected that other participants would narrate similar experiences, the narrative presented by **P4** was indicative of a pattern of discrimination that implies a prominent level of ethnic intolerance in particular industries:

"It was my second week in business. I already had three clients that I was working with from my original position at the bank and though this was sufficient to support my reputation for acquiring new clients. I visited an architectural firm in the centre of West Midlands and was absolutely humiliated. From the minute I walked through the door, it was 'Hey, Mustafa, are you a Nigerian prince with gold for transport…do you need me to rescue your sister by sending £300 to Western Union…' As I presented to the board room, there was a slew of jokes and stereotypes about Nigerian scammers that made my stomach turn. I could not get out of there fast enough. Sadly, that was just the first time and not an exception."

This experience highlights the developmental damage that stereotyping and bias, have on BAIEs, but may also demonstrate a vein of socio-ethnic history in a white/Caucasian business landscape that has yet to be overcome. **P9** narrated that "*you would think that in today's society, racism was dying off; but every time there's another report about this group in Africa or this scam or this community in the West Midlands, people jump on board and see it as justification or fodder."* **P3** reminded that "*you must have thick skin. You start here among other refugees, among other people from your culture, and you stay there because it is comfort, it is peace, it is home. In business you cannot hide; so, you branch out, but if you are not prepared for the stares, for the looks, for the judgment, you are in for a surprise.*" Unfortunately, this affective stereotyping was narrated as limiting and inhibiting to the developmental aspirations of these entrepreneurs, creating barriers to growth despite growing numbers of BAIEs in the UK.

Focusing on what **P9** had alluded to about ethnic or social discrimination based on status in the West Midlands, the participants were asked about their experiences in business development. **P3** narrated a story of systemic discrimination that suggested a pervasive pattern:

"When you start out locally, there is a strong community around you that makes you feel like you can do no wrong. Everyone is supportive and you feel like you were back

home with surrogate aunties and uncles. But the minute you walk into a white-collar firm with a presentation, they hear your voice, they see your face, there is a shift. It is maybe not intentional, but then again, maybe it is. We recruited staff after our first regular clients to mitigate this shock effect so that we fit the typical British mould more closely."

While these participants' responses are indicative of ethnic and racial bias, **P1** narrated that in the case of her retail establishment, this distinction helped her authenticity:

"At first, all my customers were from the community. They supported my shop, and it got us started. When we expanded into a new location, the demographics changed. Suddenly we were the 'exotic' or the 'native' store that people came to for something racy or 'ethnic.' Demand shifted because of our authentic homeland designs, and honestly, I think it helped."

This experience, however, was not universal, as other businesses such as **P4** and financial services were confronted with the challenge of social discrimination:

"Working at the bank, I had a shield, an institutional legitimacy. In my own business, we had a very difficult time breaking through the ceiling and attracting your typical white British clients. We had a strong presence amongst community members, people who knew and trusted me. But I had to build a client base before that trust was colourblind."

This same time of experience was narrated by **P3** who suggested that "*there's a social stigma about Nigerian tech consultants, and it doesn't make trust easy at all…it took a lot of time."* Where such trust was attained, **P9** reflected that "*you build a portfolio, you create a network of clients, you use other people to validate your skills and affirm your reputation, then you become legitimate."* These developmental approaches were conditions for achieving growth in a complex environment where ethnic identity created a condition of social injustice for these participants.

Resilience

This follow-up subset of participants was asked to reflect on their access to finance and funding opportunities, highlighting specific factors and/or resources that influenced their startup process in the West Midlands. **P4** reminded that "*this is an evolution, not a sprint; I began with limited resources, but have since invested more funds in our technology, our capabilities, and our*

growth." Similarly, **P4** recognised that "*we began with an opening balance that basically reflected my savings, but then were able to leverage our client acquisitions into additional loans and financials support."* While these two industries were self-starting and self-capitalising, **P1** in the retail industry was confronted with a variety of up-front expenses.

> *"You expect to start out small and that takes small capital investments to realise your dreams. However, in retail, you have so many different costs. There is inventory, there is display, there is technology, and even when you run the shop yourself, there is eventually staff. So, I started with my savings and started applying to banks across the city. No one would fund me. No one wanted to invest in the retail store of some immigrant without history in the UK or anywhere else, really. It was hard, and I just had to cut corners and sell things everywhere I could until I got enough capital to show sales each month. Then I could borrow from the bank and things started taking off."*

From the perspective of continued or long-term growth, the resultant findings confirmed a developmental process, whereby access to capital shifted from informal to formal processes. **P10**, for example, suggested that "*banks won't take a second look at you in the early days; but once you have regular sales and a strong, functional business plan, it is possible to gain access to loans and credit lines."* Despite such opportunities, **P9** raised the following concern about the systemic gaps in the West Midlands between small business funding and members of the Black African migrant community:

> *"Honestly, I have fought an uphill battle to get funding for any larger project. I wanted to lease an event hall to expand my planning options. But the minute they saw my last name, heard my accent, recognised what community I was a part of…it was as though I was persona non grata. My status changed during the past five years and my residency was finally approved. It still did not get any easier, and I have basically been restricted to my own channels for funding this entire time."*

According to the data, the complex and challenging business landscape in the West Midlands significantly affects the effectiveness of decision-making among BAIEs. Despite the complex and hostile environment, these entrepreneurs exhibited a robust sense of self-confidence, unwavering resolve, and resourcefulness. They exhibited adaptability and responded suitably to the complex framework of their surrounding milieu. The entrepreneurs' abilities to persevere in the face of adversity allowed them to recognise potential business opportunities, create efficient plans, and market entry frameworks that ensured the prosperity of their businesses.

6.7 Summary of Key Findings

The concept of an urban diaspora, as presented by Kourtit et al. (2013), reflects a diverse population of migrant entrepreneurs, spanning multiple generations, engaged in pursuing opportunities within complex multicultural urban environments. Despite a growing number of second-generation migrants following in their parents' entrepreneurial footsteps, a significant generational variance emerges, particularly in distinguishing between necessity-driven and opportunity-driven ventures. The innate entrepreneurial orientation observed in the study's migrants, rooted in personal goals and priorities, suggests a burgeoning diaspora effect influencing the choice of self-employment over traditional avenues in the dynamic West Midlands urban setting.

The results are derived from analysing semi-structured interviews with ten BAIEs residing in Birmingham, West Midlands. These entrepreneurs exhibit visionary leadership, a pioneering spirit, and a sense of self-actualisation, motivating them to take risks. Many entrepreneurs derived their business ideas from a deep passion for their respective fields, viewing passion as a driving force towards novelty and the establishment of a unique entrepreneurial enterprise. Initial business ideas often correlated with factors like educational qualifications or prior industry experience. Notably, participants from sectors like IT and Accounting/Finance aligned their entrepreneurial pursuits with their educational backgrounds. A considerable proportion of participants brought prior professional knowledge to their entrepreneurial endeavours, leveraging it to establish robust supplier and customer relationships.

Challenges faced by participants include funding issues, startup hurdles, and positioning limitations arising from their marginalised status as Black African immigrants. The results suggest a reliance on personal or familial financial resources, with reluctance to seek traditional institutional funding. Motivations for entrepreneurship include meeting market demand, gaining a competitive edge, family background, income prospects, and job dissatisfaction. While some entrepreneurs were motivated by a singular factor, many considered a combination of factors. A focus on the local or community level often shaped business strategies, relying on community connections and cultural involvement for immediate opportunities but risking long-term disadvantages due to developmental limitations and marginalisation.

These BAIEs demonstrate the ability to synergistically leverage various resources, including educational qualifications, professional experiences, and relationships, aligning with Barney's (1991) Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. Intangible resources such as cross-industry partnerships, incubation services, and support systems were effectively used to overcome limitations and establish

businesses based on potential rather than socioeconomic constraints. The success of these strategies reflects the entrepreneurs' determination, resilience, and dedication.

Participants emphasise future-oriented agendas aligned with long-term growth and existing organisational capabilities. The social and cultural milieu significantly influenced entrepreneurial endeavours in the West Midlands urban environment, with BAIEs experiencing othering and ethnic discrimination, particularly in sectors like IT. Despite these challenges, institutions are gradually recognising the accomplishments of BAIEs on both regional and national scales. Entities like ACH and ScaleUp Institute offer valuable assistance, signalling a positive shift in acknowledging BAIEs at the institutional level. The next chapter will analyse these key findings against the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3, and research context in Chapter 4, specifically focusing on BAIEs' opportunity recognition and new venture creation in the West Midlands urban environment.

7 Chapter – Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The research findings illuminate various intrinsic and systemic challenges that have affected these growth-constrained entrepreneurs' self-determinism and developmental arc. There were efforts to focus on an authentic representation of their perspectives and individual experiences on opportunity recognition and new venture creation in an urban environment of the West Midlands region. While these entrepreneurs' storylines are similar, the distinctions observed in these entrepreneurial opportunity narratives indicate the heterogeneity of the business development experience. The ability of an entrepreneur to adapt and be dynamic is a crucial factor in the transition from opportunity recognition to new venture creation. Time effects, family influences, and impacts on migrant communities influence this transition. Hence, the subsequent sections use a triangulation approach to synthesise the key insights gleaned from Chapter 6, aligning them with the conceptual framework encompassing social identity, self-categorisation, forms of capital, and institutional theory. These sections also draw on other pivotal concepts introduced in the literature review, spanning Chapters 2 and 3, and the research context discussed in Chapter 4. This triangulation strategy aims to provide a thorough and cohesive interpretation of the processes involved in opportunity recognition and venture creation for BAIEs in the prevalent urban environment of the West Midlands.

7.2 Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation

The present section discusses the influence of passion, education, and previous work experience on business idea generation and new venture creation among BAIEs operating in the West Midlands urban context. This section discusses the key findings in Chapter 6, Section 6.3, in connection with social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional theory (See Chapter 3, Section 3.3) and other critical concepts reviewed in the literature review Chapters 2 and 3, and the research context– Chapter 4.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research that affirms the significance of passion (Gielnik et al., 2015; Murnieks et al., 2016), education, learned skills, and previous work experience (Shane et al., 2003; Corbett, 2007; Dimov, 2010; Wood and Williams, 2012) in the identification, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities. The literature on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship highlights that most individuals within this demographic conceive their

business ideas through educational pursuits and prior work or industry involvement (Daley, 1998; Nwankwo, 2005; Domboka, 2013; Ojo, 2019). The BAIEs in this study exhibited an intense passion that pushed them towards generating their business ideas. According to Murnieks et al. (2014), a positive relationship exists between the centrality of entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial passion, which in turn leads to an increase in the time devoted by entrepreneurs towards the establishment and operation of a new venture. Although other secondary factors influenced the business idea generation of these entrepreneurs, those in the music and catering industries generated their business ideas through their passion for their given industry. In contrast, those in Retail, IT and Accounting generated their business idea through their educational qualifications and previous work experience.

It is apparent that specific industries did not require advanced academic qualifications for market entry, and many of the entrepreneurs in these industries possessed an innate drive for innovation, founding, and the establishment of a novel business enterprise. Nevertheless, specific entrepreneurs, for example, **P7**, an entrepreneur in the catering sector attributed their success to education and skills acquisition, a fundamental financial and business management foundation, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding their chosen career path. **P10**, an entrepreneur operating in the Robotics sector indicated that his pursuit of business opportunities emerged from identifying systemic gaps observed during his educational experiences. This phenomenon is evident in the following fundamental assertion:

> *"The industry here was slow moving and dull. I wanted to get out ahead of things and I had some money saved from working through college, so I could start small and expand."*

Another important observation was that many first-generation Black African migrants (those who migrated in adulthood) pursue educational opportunities in the UK and develop their businesses through such pathways. At the same time, second-generation Black African migrants (those born in the UK) commit to expanding their educational qualifications and abilities as a means of competitive advantage in their socio-economic environment. These entrepreneurs are naturally inclined to innovate, establish, and develop business ventures. Educational background and previous work experience are critical factors that contribute to their entrepreneurial pursuits, consistent with the findings of Kourtit et al. (2013) and Ojo (2012; 2013; 2019) in their respective research studies.

Furthermore, networks are a crucial antecedent in the opportunity recognition process of BAIEs (Nwankwo, 2005; Ekulugo, 2006; Ojo, 2013). Based upon the tenets of the self-categorisation theory,

BAIEs in this study categorised themselves based on affiliative conditions before creating their business ventures (Turner et al., 1987). Loosely connected ethnic networks provided numerous opportunities and connections. In a prior empirical study, Docquier and Rapoport (2012) observed a condition of platform-based entrepreneurship, whereby migrant enclaves form the basis for idea sharing and incubation, developing linked networks to influence and support entrepreneurial orientation. Where individuals cannot access external networks or form relationships along market-related lines of competitive positioning, their likelihood of defaulting to enclave-based entrepreneurial orientation increases, leading to ideological and economic dependency (Docquier and Rapoport, 2012; Bizri, 2017). For example, Berwing (2019) demonstrated that migrant entrepreneurs are more likely to hire members of their same cultural in-group due to the closeness and accessibility of their immediate social networks. However, they will still extend beyond these boundaries. As these entrepreneurs navigate new domestic institutions, pathways to external growth are recognised, and there is a reduction in ethnic networks and an innate expansion towards national integration (Berwing, 2019).

The participants of this study used a range of resources instead of relying on a single resource. There was a prominent sense of self-exclusion, with many revealing pathways to entrepreneurship that were contingent upon self-direction and community or familial support (Nwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019). For many founders, the accessibility of startup funding is a core antecedent to long-term success (Saxenian et al., 2002; Kašperová et al., 2022; Andrews, 2023). Throughout the participant responses, the primary funding source was personal savings (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), with some individuals relying upon family funds or friends' investments to bolster their startup capital (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Nwankwo, 2005). Universally, the participants narrated that their friends and family were their support foundation, with financial, emotional, and social resources forming the basis for entrepreneurial opportunity-seeking (Granovetter, 1995). These findings are like the operational mechanisms of networks within the Black African migrant population. 'Trust' is the fundamental element that underlies the networking strategies of these entrepreneurs, who establish connections through familial ties, close friendships, or individuals belonging to the same ethnic group (Putnam, 1993; Gbadamosi, 2015).

The findings from this study highlight the significance of various forms of capital in the entrepreneurial endeavours of BAIEs' professional networks, a form of social capital, played a crucial role as participants leveraged relationships established with customers and suppliers during their prior employments. These networks served as valuable resources, enabling entrepreneurs to access initial markets, secure advance cash receipts on future orders, and garner support for their ventures (Portes, 1998; Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Bizri, 2017). The strategies employed by the participants reflected

the use of financial capital from diverse sources. For instance, participant **P10's** initiation of progress through a paid design service indicates the strategic utilisation of financial resources from external sources (Saxenian et al., 2002; Drori et al., 2009). Additionally, **P9's** reliance on a loan shark, albeit after exhausting personal savings, underscores the multifaceted nature of financial capital and the various channels entrepreneurs may explore to secure funding (Bourdieu, 1986; Rath and Swagerman, 2016). Furthermore, participants demonstrated the deployment of human capital, drawing on their expertise and insights gained from previous work or industry experience (Knatko et al., 2016). Entrepreneurs in Accounting (**P4, P5, P6**) and IT (**P2, P3**) highlighted the relevance of human capital in their ventures, using their professional knowledge to navigate challenges and make informed decisions (Kloosterman and Rath, 2003; Wang and Altinay, 2012; Chowdhury et al., 2013). Moreover, the strategies mentioned, such as reinvestments, cultivating customer and supplier relationships, prioritising product quality, service quality, and implementing direct marketing techniques, underscore the importance of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Entrepreneurs strategically used these forms of capital to build confidence, differentiate their products, and establish a foothold in the market.

Many BAIEs embark on their entrepreneurial journey with a specific vision aligned with their unique skill sets and experiences. However, the success of their startups, including acquiring financial resources and forming strategic partnerships, is influenced by the principles of social identity and self-categorisation. In academic theory, these forms of narrow-band support are seen as constrictive mechanisms that not only diminish the effectiveness of individual decision-making but also limit openness to broader developmental opportunities (Neville et al., 2018). Systemic and institutional inequalities stemming from the social identity and self-categorisation phenomenon in developed markets, such as the UK, can be discouraging, leading some aspiring entrepreneurs to opt for traditional employment paths rather than confronting barriers to founding their own businesses (Powell and Menedian, 2016; Neville et al., 2018). For Black African immigrants in the West Midlands urban environment, pursuing short-term economic pathways may seem more accessible than venturing into personal business founding or larger-scale enterprises. The issue, as observed in participant responses, lies in biased external information channels based on the experiences and response cycles of the preceding migrant population. The translated agenda for migrants, shaped by their family history, often reflects a hard-work protocol derived from the experiences of their parents (Ojo, 2019). This perspective was consistently observed across participant narratives, with external triggers such as family needs, community gaps, or legacy goals often pushing individuals towards entrepreneurial outcomes. These observations align with insights from institutional theory,

emphasising the influence of societal structures, norms, and regulations on the entrepreneurial endeavours of migrants (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

While many entrepreneurs will begin their developmental pathway through their educational background and previous work experience, the long-term developmental arc of the enterprise is likely to reflect an array of evolving triggers and goal-shaping effects. Hussain et al. (2008), for example, offered interview findings that highlighted early-phase prioritisation of industries where aspiring entrepreneurs had gained some initial experience; however, over time, the pressures and demands of their personal and professional aspirations encouraged amendments and refocusing. Whether this involves re-orientation of business practices within a given organisation (e.g. taking on new partners, identifying new products) or it involves completely revising the core product or services of a business (e.g. shifting from catering to event planning), the experiential pathways navigated by the entrepreneur are a critical contributor to crucial resources such as managerial experience, social capital, and network awareness (Hussain et al., 2008). Throughout the participant results in this study, it was evident that initial intentions were merely the first phase of developmental processes, with participants citing transformative effects that reshaped their priorities and long-term business vision as they expanded beyond the limitations of the startup agenda.

Furthermore, the central idea of the multiplier effect underscoring ethnic-owned businesses and in-group support for migrant business development is that groups will band together to eliminate systemic barriers to growth and opportunity by creating Black-owned supply chains to support Black entrepreneurs who hire Black employees and cater to the loyal populations of Black consumers and their sympathisers (Boyd, 2012). However, the suppression hypothesis offers an opposing perspective in which Black entrepreneurs experience in-group competition where migrant status and entrepreneurial aspirations become disadvantages for individuals threatened by members of their ethnic group (Boyd, 2012). Comparing success to other individuals of the same social group based on status not only puts the migrant community at a disadvantage but also confers supplementary benefits to business proprietors belonging to the majority of White or other ethnic groups, where conventional socio-economic trends promote collaboration and coordination. Boyd's (2012) insights regarding in-group exclusion and discrimination highlight the threats faced by successful Black entrepreneurs in systems where competition for resources and achievements creates controversies between group members (e.g. two Black migrants from Nigeria seeking to invest in an African food store). However, Black African immigrants with advanced educational qualifications and acquired skills can use these achievements to effectively compete in the market with their in-group and the broader ethnic population in the UK. When compared across the sample populations for this study, evidence can be confirmed to validate the propositions mentioned above.

Proposition I: BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context weave their entrepreneurial paths with a blend of passion and education. Those with advanced degrees in IT and Accounting/Finance align businesses with academic expertise, emphasising a deliberate link between education and entrepreneurial choices. Meanwhile, BAIEs in fields like catering and music production initiate ventures fuelled by genuine enthusiasm, embodying a subjective and emotionally charged approach to business. These entrepreneurs actively acquire skills to enhance market competitiveness, highlighting a commitment to their industries.

7.2.1 The Influence of West Midlands Institutional Structure on Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation

The present section discusses the influence of institutional context on business idea generation and entrepreneurs' subsequent creation of new ventures. The present section centres on examining the impact of societal, cultural, and economic determinants on business ideation and the establishment of new ventures within the Black African immigrant entrepreneurial community in the West Midlands urban context.

Central to the structural forces that predict formal migrant entrepreneurship is a regulatory framework that is inclusive and incentivising. Ojo et al. (2013) have demonstrated that when migrants experience political pressures or restrictive systems, their pursuit of informal economic opportunities increases. This theory links opportunity effects to necessity and, therefore, represents a disadvantage force that contrasts with the economic needs of the individual. The illegality, alternatively, is frequently a socially embedded representation of the experience of the migrant, whereby marginal self-employment opportunities and limited economic advantages translate into opportunity-based decisions that include illegal activities (Ojo et al., 2013). A substantial ‘if-then’ contrast was observed in the participant result that mirrors the findings of Nwankwo (2005) regarding procedural and systemic delays in entrepreneurial activities. From opportunity recognition to enterprise creation, the interruption of intentions based upon limiting domestic systems and complex legislative requirements (e.g. taxes) meant that startup opportunities were conditioned by West Midlands institutional background and not just by the tenacity or motivations of the individual.

Unfortunately, the past inadequacies or deficiencies of forerunners not only influence the socio-cultural drawbacks of the new diaspora BAIEs but also have the potential to guide projections concerning commercial prospects and resource accessibility in regional markets (Neville et al., 2018), such as the West Midlands. Neville et al. (2018) have presented narratives that depict discouragement

among entrepreneurs due to a misalignment between their expectations and the realistic market conditions resulting from prior activities. The current study's participants have narrated anticipation of adverse outcomes that stems from the forecast of systemic bias due to cultural or heritage stereotypes. This bias not only dissuades Black African migrants from seeking loans but also undermines their belief in the feasibility of entrepreneurship in competitive markets. The status of being a migrant entails an opportunity cost that is acknowledged and incorporated into the migrant's idea generation, venture creation, daily objective-setting, and progress-tracking. However, this approach may be counterproductive and disruptive when applied to higher-level decision-making or growth prospects.

Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018) presented narrative evidence from Black African immigrants in the UK, which indicated that although a significant number of participants had successfully attained their academic goals, such as obtaining a degree or specialisation, their lack of practical experience in business management had a detrimental impact on their ability to achieve their professional aspirations through entrepreneurial means. The study's participants were requested to contemplate how they commenced their business ventures. The inquiry included a series of questions centred on the distinct procedural or passage-based factors that influenced their shift from the informal to the formal economy of the UK. The study's participants attested to the considerable challenges posed by HRM practices and insufficient training, experience, or knowledge. These challenges were identified within the administrative challenges section (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3) and impacted the development of business ventures.

One of the more powerful concepts introduced in the literature, 'cognitive adaptability,' is an entrepreneurial trait that allows an individual to respond flexibly to changing, complex conditions or situations. **P2**, an IT expert, for example, was confronted with the challenge of identifying clients outside of their immediate community and building relationships that would not only sustain their business goals but would pay for them to continue to operate while they were recruiting new clients and business partners. Additionally, **P6** narrated a similar experience, which is evident in the following fundamental assertion:

> *"In this business, it is all about who you know, and if you do not know enough people, then who can you network with to expand your base. For me, that meant targeting high-value clients, building network lists, and developing strong relationships with people that could help us achieve our goals."*

The findings of this study indicate that the business founders' developmental trajectory was self-directed, despite their knowledge of government support agencies and intermediary solutions, as evidenced by the participants' responses. The extent and regularity of their utilisation and integration of external institutions during their opportunity recognition and new venture creation phase were primarily limited to matters on the establishment or, subsequently, in the company's chronicles, centred on requirements related to HRM. The study found that many participants needed more practical experience and had skill gaps in business management. As a result, external support could have been beneficial. However, due to a lack of trust in domestic agencies and limited knowledge of available support services, the participants focused on self, family, and social networks to raise initial startup capital and community-based solutions to improve their skills and knowledge. Although the effects may be limited, the evidence presented in the narrative indicates that certain domestic institutions, such as ACH, ScaleUp, and SYOB, were identified as contagion forces. These institutions defined the arc of the business development path and supported the transition from a personally held idea or vision into a concrete and tangible enterprise.

While BAIEs may gradually explore independent agency support and outside intermediary organisations, their distrust for formal government systems and services continues to impact their openness to incubators and formal government services. Community organisations and networks use socio-cultural affiliation to build trust with migrant populations, creating services experienced by one or more individuals and then passed downstream to other participants (Martes and Rodriguez, 2004). However, one of the core problems Nwankwo (2005) identified is that many migrants view domestic policymakers and local officials as outsiders, individuals without direct knowledge or understanding of their unique problems or needs. As a result, BAIEs use self-preservation to avoid interactions with these groups and create dependencies within their socio-cultural networks, leading to exclusionary effects that reduce the likelihood of participation in traditional institutional support systems (Nwankwo, 2005). In interviewing the participants of this current study, the sense of self-exclusion was prominent, with many revealing pathways to entrepreneurship that were contingent upon self-direction and community or familial support. Regarding mistrust or direct avoidance of public services, the restrictive effect of autonomous motivations and self-actualisation further prioritised a bootstrapping approach to entrepreneurial success. Without adequate trust and connections within the institutional systems that exist in the UK, the likelihood that migrants will pursue these resources to their full extent is limited; therefore, the systemic disadvantages encountered during the business startup process will continue to limit the potential for sustainable growth and business expansion.

In some cases, these systemic constraints can lead to a default strategy of economy-seeking at any cost, a condition that exposes migrants to the vulnerabilities of the informal economy. As

evidenced by Welter et al. (2015), the informal economy is both an institution and a consequence, forming out of necessity and normalisation as individuals and groups negotiate their terms of economic exchange. In communities where cultural values and practices are likely to encourage micro-entrepreneurship and small-scale business development, the likelihood of informal exchanges (e.g. cash, trade) and non-regulated systems increases, leading to critical gap-filling scenarios (Zabyelina, 2012). Where more rigorous national systems are likely to impose constraints on business development or restrict the viability of formal incorporation, the role of the informal economy becomes increasingly essential, filling systemic gaps for networks and populations who are underserved or lack adequate access to more traditional systems (Welter and Smallbone, 2011b; Welter et al., 2015). For the entrepreneurs who participated in the current study, there were various hurdles such as funding, regulatory oversight, and resource acquisition, leading to a foundation of informal economic development that precipitated the formal establishment of a legitimate, compliant enterprise.

> **Proposition II:** BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context possess significant knowledge capital, encompassing education and skills. Initial start-up funds are often sourced from personal savings and communal networks, representing a reliance on social capital. As their entrepreneurial journey unfolds, they may strategically use institutional resources for guidance. Upon the establishment of their businesses, a potential transition is observed, wherein these entrepreneurs may turn to formal financial institutions.

7.3 Motivations to Initiate a Business Venture

This section discusses how self-actualisation, income prospects, competitive advantage/market demand, job dissatisfaction, and family background motivate BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context to start a new venture with their capabilities and available resources. This section discusses the findings from Chapter 6, Section 6.4, in connection with social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional theory (See Chapter 3, Section 3.3) and other critical concepts reviewed in the literature review Chapters 2 and 3, and the research context– Chapter 4.

7.3.1 Opportunity Seeking and Needs-Driven Entrepreneurs

The BAIEs recruited for this study were motivated by factors such as self-actualisation, income prospects, competitive advantage/market demand, job dissatisfaction, and family background. However, a distinction was observable within the participant responses that subdivided the

opportunity-seeking or passion-driven entrepreneurs (**P1, P7, P8, P9, P10**) from the needs-oriented or career-driven entrepreneurs (**P2, P3, P4, P5, P6**). The variation between opportunity seekers and needs-oriented participants was manifest in the underlying sentiment observed within these responses. Highlighting exasperation and frustration, **P4** reflected that "*I was tired of working at the bank for just over minimum wages. They call it a living wage, but who really lives on it?"* **P7** reported that he "*needed to increase my income level…to grow somewhere where I felt like I was improving myself."* These comments are not momentary epiphanies or observations of systemic gaps, instead, they are an acknowledgement of dissatisfaction with the existing status quo. For example, **P10** indicated that despite numerous opportunities amongst high technology firms in the West Midlands, he "*wanted to do something cutting edge"* and was challenged to redirect his contributions towards a self-driven, entrepreneurial solution. Given that the motivation characteristics underscoring the decision to engage in entrepreneurship were primarily linked to either opportunity or need, the relationship between the individual and their target industry revolved around such centrifugal effects.

The research findings of this study are consistent with previous academic studies that validate the notion that BAIEs' motive to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits stems from their socioeconomic challenges, such as inadequate remuneration (Nwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2021), and institutionalised disparities (Powell and Menendian, 2016; Mekonnen, 2018). Individuals may pursue entrepreneurial activities for several reasons, developing diverse entrepreneurial identities (Shane et al., 2003; Hessels et al., 2008; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013). The divergent aspirations among BAIEs may influence their pursuits in the West Midlands urban environment. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) propose that social identity theory can be used as a theoretical framework to identify various entrepreneurial identities based on differences in fundamental social motivation, self-evaluation, and entrepreneurial frame of reference. Thus, an entrepreneur with a specific frame of reference on their identity will use that same reference during the decision-making process related to entrepreneurial behaviour. Before commencing their diverse business ventures, the participants of this study possessed an ideology that relates to their social identity as a social group often subjected to marginalisation. According to Kabote (2020), Black African migrants are subject to stereotyping and discrimination that limits their capacity and entrepreneurial vision. They are often recommended for low-paid employment, which inherently diminishes their career growth, participation, and economic contribution.

The motivations of entrepreneurs, derived from cues in their work, education, and regional environment, reveal a multifaceted decision-making process (Fenech et al., 2019). Some entrepreneurs are guided by a single factor, while others navigate a complex interplay of influences, including self-actualisation, income prospects, competitive advantage, job dissatisfaction, and family background (Shane et al., 2003; Hessels et al., 2008; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013). This aligns with the

concept that entrepreneurs shape their identities based on social motivations and evaluations, as proposed by social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). The study establishes a causal link between social norms and entrepreneurial motivations, recognising that these norms can either support or impede individuals' ventures, particularly in the unconventional context of West Midlands urban society. This resonates with the social impact effects discussed by Fenech et al. (2019), highlighting challenges stemming from systemic gaps and societal expectations. The economic disadvantage faced by Black African immigrants underscores the vulnerability of this social group, necessitating the adoption of humility and self-preservation strategies for long-term stability, especially considering the impact of systemic structures on entrepreneurial decision-making (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001).

One concept emphasised throughout the prior literature in this field is adversity. For example, Powell and Baker (2014) described adversity as a conditioning mechanism that would make aspiring entrepreneurs more resilient to market challenges. For many of these BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment, adversity in the form of a complex African heritage (e.g. Black and migrant) and effects of othering in their socioeconomic setting (e.g. self-actualisation, income prospects, job dissatisfaction, and low-income family background) not only accelerated the rate of entrepreneurial opportunity but the intentions to realise such outcomes through purposeful orientation. Morris and Tucker (2021) observe that entrepreneurship is often an incomplete or inefficient objective with weak infrastructure, limited network relationships, and inadequate resources. At the same time, when these founders establish new business ventures due to ethnic market demand, filling specific niches or providing services that were otherwise unavailable to a given market, the opportunity to gain experience at a steady or rapid pace is increased (Morris and Tucker, 2021). However, attempts to grow the enterprises into higher-value business models will result in service gaps or competitive pressures that further restrict business development and growth.

The adversities associated with self-actualisation, income prospects, competitive advantage/market demand, job dissatisfaction, and family background can lead to forces that direct entrepreneurial orientation towards business opportunities and investment strategies. Powell and Baker (2014) observe adversity's critical role in shaping the orientation of founder mentality in entrepreneurship, suggesting that conditioning effects can lead to varied outcomes of the priority and agenda-setting behaviours adopted by the immigrant entrepreneur. Edelman et al. (2010) highlight such effects as an affective influence of self-actualisation and startup success in determining the perceived value of founder efforts in business startup initiatives. Whereby BAIEs confront adversities stemming from self-actualisation, low income, job dissatisfaction, and poverty in their family, the willingness to exert significant efforts to realise a tangible, positive performance outcome in the form

of a successful business is increased (Edelman et al., 2010). Gatewood et al. (2002) research validates the correlation between entrepreneurial motivations with a perception of opportunity created by persons seeking to increase their income. However, for BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment, this path is often dependent upon the accessibility of domestic resources.

Disadvantaged or low-income family background in the participant responses was narrated as both a condition and a motivator, affecting the perceived need for these individuals to create some form of a sustainable pathway that would allow them to overcome the weight of socioeconomic disadvantages. One of the motivations observed within the participant responses was that for some of these migrants (e.g., **P1**), many people depend upon their success, placing pressures upon the shoulders of these economic agents. This observation, for example, is grounded in the fundamental assertion:

> *"For me, I have to say that the motivation of my children has had a powerful influence. I have support from family and relatives, but when I look in their faces, I see kids that deserve more than I had growing up. I want to build their future and I am not getting any younger. I did not have a lot of money. I did not know where anything was. But I did have my designs and the passion to get the business setup."*

For first-generation Black African migrants who have left family and friends in dire scenarios at home, the pressure to send remittances will likely increase their desire to attain gainful employment as quickly as possible. For others who have their family with them, living in complex, impoverished environments are likely to motivate their accelerated transition into a productive and self-sustaining entrepreneurial environment. Despite the expectation that entrepreneurship can alleviate poverty in low-income communities, the evidence presented by Korosteleva and Stepien-Baig (2020) suggests that such effects are limited by the specialisation and earning potential of the business itself. Instead, a universal psychological advantage is associated with the entrepreneurial motivation that inspires economic improvement and facilitates positive developmental outcomes as BAIEs access and activate their earning potential (Korosteleva and Stepien-Baig, 2020). This advantage reflects a metacognitive shift away from network dependency and towards self-actualisation that reflects the commitment of personal resources and competencies to realising targeted startup goals.

> **Proposition III:** The entrepreneurial pursuits of individuals with Black African immigrant backgrounds in the West Midlands urban environment are shaped by diverse motivations. Passion-driven entrepreneurs draw inspiration from ethnic market demand, familial responsibilities, and self-actualisation. On the other hand, career-

oriented individuals undertake entrepreneurial endeavours seeking self-fulfilment, overcoming financial constraints, and addressing dissatisfaction with their current employment.

7.3.2 The Influence of West Midlands Institutional Structure on Motivation to Initiate a Business Venture

The present section discusses the influence of the West Midlands institutional context (sociological, cultural, political, and economic factors) on Black African immigrants' motivations to transform their business ideas into new ventures.

The entrepreneurial landscape for BAIEs is challenging and opportunistic, arising from regional variations in entrepreneurial attitude, activity, and culture. These entrepreneurs must navigate their environment and respond effectively to changes to adapt and evolve their businesses. The literature has established that historical, demographic, socioeconomic development and institutional factors contribute to regional and national variations in entrepreneurial attitude and activity (Ram, 1994; Deakins and Freel, 2009; GEM, 2017). These factors are crucial in determining the success or failure of enterprises. Establishing an entrepreneurial culture is facilitated by clusters, supportive social capital, entrepreneurial support services, and actively engaged research universities. These conditions particularly appeal to new entrepreneurs adapting to a new environment and have significant implications for entrepreneurs' motivation, managerial practices, and business performance, which has been noted by various researchers (Autio et al., 2012; Ojo, 2013; GEM, 2017). Extending the notion of systemic disadvantage for BAIEs, Chair of the One Africa Network, Eugene Nizeyimana, reported that “the challenges also range from institutional, cultural bias, complexities, and integration barriers that affect Africans who form a significant proportion of diasporas, experts, professionals, and the business community in the Midlands” (Kabote, 2020: 1).

The fourth chapter of this PhD thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the geography, demography, economy, and social factors that influence BAIEs in the West Midlands. The exploration is based on empirical evidence, providing a rigorous and evidence-based understanding of the region’s development. Industries such as mining, textiles, agriculture, and steel, which experienced a decline in the 1980s due to intense global competition (Bhattacharyya, 2019), dominated the region's economic landscape. The region has experienced a resurgence in economic development, primarily attributable to the expansion of the business and professional services sector, the growth of technology-focused manufacturing, and the development of urban centres such as Birmingham (Bhattacharyya, 2019). Despite the expansion, significant obstacles persist, such as

inequalities, poverty, youth unemployment, secondary education, and inadequate skills (ONS, 2021). As residents of the West Midlands strive to engage in entrepreneurial activities, the reverberating effects of low-paying jobs, financial adversity, and societal issues continue to resonate throughout the region's communities. Storey (1994) and Aldrich et al. (2023) have provided explanations for the difficulties and opportunities that emerged in the UK following the post-industrialisation period. This era witnessed increased self-employment due to significant job losses, especially among ethnic minorities who regarded self-employment as a path to social mobility and economic independence.

In this study, the entrepreneurs were both experientially and industrially diverse, emphasising comparability across multiple types of entrepreneurial businesses. Murnieks et al. (2011) describe a condition of localisation bias that naturally orients individuals in each region or enclave towards specific behavioural patterns or investment decisions. For example, in London, the prevalence of financial services industries, large-scale creative organisations, and technology firms create a motivational basis for entrepreneurs to navigate towards these industries (Ojo, 2013). In the West Midlands, however, the heterogeneity of business development agendas indicated a multi-dimensional effect, increasing the importance of unique skill sets and competencies over the collective standard. This effect can have consequences for funding entrepreneurial activities, as investors may exhibit preferences for a particular business or industry over others, reducing the likelihood that these secondary enterprises will get funded via outside venture capital (Franke et al., 2008). Alternatively, the regionalised group economy described by Boyd (2012) can be used to accelerate the rate of marketisation as these small businesses utilise local trust and social capital to stimulate interest and reduce the need for outside funding.

The consequences of othering and outsider status can have a significant psychological and sociological impact on BAIEs' abilities to assimilate or integrate within the West Midlands society, mainly when other social stereotypes restrict affiliative outcomes (e.g. politics, stereotyping, legal status) and network connections. Citing evidence from Germany and other EU nations, Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) demonstrated that due to both self and social categorisation, immigrants are severely disadvantaged in the EU due to a longstanding colonial legacy and historic out-group affiliation. As populist and political agendas exacerbate cross-cultural tensions, the stereotyping and othering of these populations are increasingly creating barriers to assimilation, resulting in a default position of an outsider that results in in-group dependency (Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). Supporting such findings, Udah (2018) has also demonstrated empirically that in Western nations, migrants of Black African immigrant origin are not only subject to stereotyping and discrimination but experience general grouping and othering that restricts their ability to pursue broader, higher-quality employment opportunities. The identity effects of these forces, particularly those that result in

lost opportunities, have psychological impacts on the migrant opportunity seekers, resulting in regressive behaviour and default in-group affiliations (Udah, 2018). Suppose migrants are inherently predisposed to believe they do not conform to society's norms. In that case, their likely response to situational and socio-economic pressures will be self-distancing, which may lead to an innate social bias in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

There is a conditioning mechanism that was observed in prior research conducted by Nwankwo (2005) and Ojo (2012; 2021) that extends the goal-setting effects of adversity and life pathways (e.g. from civil war environments) into the social identity and self-categorisation of the migrant in the developed, urban landscape. For Black African immigrants, pursuing socio-economic opportunities in developed nations such as the UK will likely lead to a mirroring effect connecting individuals to migrant predecessors and existing enclaves established over decades of migration and social positioning. Central to the narrative reports of refugees presented by Bizri (2017) is the concept of collective bootstrapping, a strategic alignment by migrants to the collective challenge associated with economic sustainability, buoyant remittances, and financial success abroad. The underlying motives of individuals from war-torn countries such as Syria demonstrate a developmental imperative, compelling migrants to create economic opportunities and to translate adversity into favourable social support structures via remittances and family inclusion (Bizri, 2017). Although compelling, these motivations also limit individuals seeking entrepreneurial endeavours because they impose an economic imperative requiring opportunity-based decisions rather than strategic ones. There is an underlying imperative of success by which these individuals measure their achievements according to their advantages over previous generations or other local stakeholders, thereby reducing the strategic efficacy of their developmental priorities.

A core limitation of the results received from these entrepreneurs is their socio-economic successes and, by default, their awareness of the benefits of entrepreneurship without consideration for the consequences of failure or loss. The literature on entrepreneurial successes suggests that domestic and international adversity does not prevent people from achieving their personal and professional goals (Sefiani, 2013). However, Mendy and Hack-Polay (2018) present evidence regarding startup failures due to inadequate resourcing, overwhelming market pressures, and complex socio-competitive situations that can reduce the likelihood of short-term success. Once failure is acknowledged, these entrepreneurs explore alternative solutions, many of which derive from improving their skill sets and competencies, building new industry relationships, or pursuing funding for a new, innovative business idea (Mendy and Hack-Polay, 2018). However, the distancing effects of cognitive disconfirmation due to failed expectations can have a powerful, negative, and

demotivational effect on entrepreneurial intentions, potentially leading to course corrections and refocusing of personal resources in the future on more viable business opportunities.

A critical challenge to entrepreneurial positioning and opportunity-seeking in the UK, the rising diversity of the incoming domestic ethnic population directly shapes national stereotypes, regionalisation initiatives, and social exclusionism. Nevertheless, despite evidence presented by past researchers, including Cook et al. (2004), Nwankwo (2005), and Arrighetti et al. (2014) regarding the ethnic enclaves and religious dependency of migrant populations, there are advantages to the diversity and heterogeneity across these populations that warrant alternative perspectives. For example, Ojo (2012: 154) proposes that because African populations represent an "overlapping aggregation of different tribes and ethnic groups," a subdivision of ethnicity and cultural origin determines the arc and targets of transnational entrepreneurship. Specifically, where Nigerians are likely to engage in religious zeal or religion-affirmed enterprise, other populations may prioritise community, technology, or industry by targeting more secular outcomes (Ojo, 2012). In-cultural specialisation, therefore, may create advantages for aspiring entrepreneurs willing to follow the cues and precedence of their cultural forebearers as they seek to establish their status and position within the national substructures.

While ethnic enclaves play a critical role in compartmentalising these immigrants within the boundaries of their limited, narrow environments, expanding business opportunities through progressive success and goal achievement was also observed to overshadow such effects and allow these migrants to expand their position beyond those assigned by their collective economy (Arrighetti et al., 2014). The research revealed that the West Midlands region exerts a more significant influence on migrant motivations compared to prior studies centring on London's diverse enclaves, particularly in the context of entrepreneurial ventures. Therefore, aligning community intentions and goal setting with unique business ideas was found to have the most significant impact on new venture creation. The migrant pathway from opportunity recognition to new venture was one characterised by adversity, complexity, and socio-cultural pressures; however, as the veil of dependency lifted from these visionary business creators, the opportunities afforded by a heterogeneous domestic market like that of the West midlands was found to have a powerful effect on growth opportunities.

> **Proposition IV:** BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context are driven to turn innovative business ideas into ventures due to the appeal of ethnic niche markets. Their motivation stems from a complex interplay of challenges, including the pursuit of self-fulfilment, discontent with traditional employment conditions, aspirations for improved financial prospects, and a keen sense of familial responsibility. Dissatisfaction with

existing job opportunities prompts these BAIEs to channel their efforts into businesses aligned with their passions, often starting informally and potentially growing into fully-fledged enterprises over time.

7.4 Entrepreneurial Objectives and Goal Realisation

This section discusses the outcomes derived from the analysis of Chapter 6, Section 6.5, which pertains to BAIEs' entrepreneurial goals (namely, business development and diversification) in the West Midlands urban context. This discussion is in connection with social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional theory (See Chapter 3, Section 3.3) and other critical concepts reviewed in the literature review Chapters 2 and 3, and the research context– Chapter 4. This section discusses the entrepreneurial objectives of these business owners and the strategies they employ to attain their goals.

The study's findings indicate that BAIEs encounter barriers in pursuing entrepreneurial goals, primarily attributed to systemic disparities arising from the effects of social identity and self-categorisation. Critical aspects influencing their business performance, including productivity, turnover, and profitability, fall short of achieving the median levels of success (Wyman, 2020). Kabote (2020) has identified several factors that impede the development and growth of Black African immigrant enterprises, specifically from a West Midlands perspective. These factors include restricted access to startup finance and growth capital, inadequate financial management and controls, deficient management skills, insufficient technology adoption, inadequate branding and marketing, inadequate customer service, insufficient product innovation, and deficient entrepreneurial ecosystems and networks. When we consider all these factors with institutional barriers and discrimination/stereotyping, the goal of developing or diversifying their business becomes an essential topic of discussion.

For the participants of this study, there is a natural tension between the opportunities for business development and diversification and the increasingly complicated array of market and economic challenges they face. While Choi and Shepherd (2004) observe that entrepreneurs confront the need to accelerate their time to market to outpace competitors, in today's high-technology, high-innovation marketplace, such lead times are often non-existent. Alternatively, believing in customer value or needs fulfilment will stimulate startup decisions as founders recognise the potential advantages of achieving first-mover status in highly competitive markets (Choi and Shepherd, 2004). Several participants in the current study acknowledged that their expansion into self-employment was based upon this recognition of opportunity as they reframed their long-term economic goals according

to the opportunities afforded by changing markets and changing service options. Although the West Midlands system restrains and restricts outward diversification (Kabote, 2020), the successful entrepreneurs in this study have leveraged their vision for future opportunities to fundamentally improve upon the services and products they offer to this complex marketplace. Whether this meant quitting their current employment and seeking new business partners or extending their position into a previously unoccupied space, the growth opportunity required persistence, vision, and a commitment to success.

Systemic or resource barriers often restrict the pathway to a self-sustaining enterprise, posing a challenge for aspiring BAIEs in business development. Logan et al. (2003) have noted that in migrant communities, the convergence of entrepreneurial goals among individuals of the same ethnic group can lead to favourable opportunities attributed to the alignment of interests. However, the problem with this approach to entrepreneurship is that it creates dependencies that often extend beyond the barriers of domestic systems and ensnare aspiring BAIEs in an inertia-laden fabric of ethnic economies and mobility traps. In situations where the costs of missed opportunities outweigh the potential benefits of pursuing self-sustaining and self-actualising entrepreneurship, the outcome of community dependency can be substantial and have a considerable adverse effect on the goal setting and extrication of migrants. **P1** provided a narrative of the abovementioned phenomenon. The participant in question relied heavily upon a rich ethnic history to not only direct the opening of a retail establishment but to classify the products offered within this establishment according to ethnically valuable clothing. The strategy of ethnic specification adopted by **P1** enabled the business to prosper in its targeted ethnic market. However, the entrepreneur's reliance on local artisans and fashion designers from the same ethnic community to facilitate business growth impeded the pace of expansion (Volery, 2007). It hindered the achievement of long-term growth objectives such as diversification, expansion to multiple locations, and broadening of the customer base. These observations, for example, are in the following fundamental assertions:

> *"I am an ethnic entrepreneur seeking a multinational clientele to purchase my diversified range of products from a varied spectrum of cultures and backgrounds."*
>
> *"I am an ethnic entrepreneur selling ethnic clothing and specialised products to a discrete population of consumers who are ethnically invested and value the associated products for their ethnic identity."*
>
> *"I am an entrepreneur with multiple retail outlets selling a diverse product line to a diverse consumer base."*

In interpreting these statements, the first and the last statements reflect the most accurate positioning, whereby ethnicity is merely a consequence of heritage and an extended immigrant identity. The middle statement, however, reveals the potential pitfalls of ethnic entrepreneurship for ethnicity's sake. The threat of social identity and self-categorisation could significantly impede an individual's ability to expand their enterprise beyond categorical and situational boundaries. Due to the pressures placed upon the migrant individual within a welfare-based standard of socio-economic support, a breakout function facilitates the jump from poverty to success (Vickers and Rutter, 2018; Daniel et al., 2019). While education provides the primary gap-spanning resource for these participants, there was also a restrictive character to skills-oriented entrepreneurship that led to framing the future business structure adopted by these migrants. From what Grgoleit-Richter (2017) observed as the ethnical structures of local businesses to the narrow scope of developmental priorities, this precedence of embedded identity frames the priorities and agendas of the aspiring migrant.

At the core of some participant narratives was a sense of post-generational achievement, whereby the legacy of the father or mother was necessary to achieve self-measured business success. Baycan et al. (2012) observe that despite similar pathways into developed nations, the startup priorities for first and second-generation migrants vary, with second-generation founders often adopting a risk-oriented rather than risk-averse approach to broader, skilled industry business creation. There is a moderation in this process by personal resources, including education, work experience, and economic resources; however, by leveraging modern technological solutions, extending interests beyond purely cultural standards and practices, and identifying new, innovative industry opportunities, the new diaspora entrepreneurs are consistently distancing their goals and agendas from those (risk-averse, safe, local) of their predecessors (Kourtit et al., 2013).

However, as firms expand in formality and growth opportunities, Murnieks et al. (2011) observe that the characteristics and identity of the founder will play a direct role in receiving startup capital from a Venture Capitalist or outside firm. Thought processes and cognitive orientation represent mechanisms of value alignment that Venture Capitalists weigh in considering the attractiveness of a potential startup, even when at the early phase of its formalisation (Murnieks et al., 2011). Franke et al. (2008) suggest that when firms can follow through on commitments or meet specific milestones, their contribution to a positive relational alliance will be improved, creating advantages for negotiating Venture Capitalist deals and establishing value for potential investors. Many of the investments made by the entrepreneurs in this study targeted formalisation, which ranged from financial systems and internal accounting to advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capabilities. While all these participants indicated a motivation to succeed, the alignment between such motivations and the trackability, monitoring, and transparency afforded by

improved information technologies will communicate formality and modernity to a potential business partner.

> **Proposition V:** The cultural identity of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context moulded through social identification and self-categorisation, markedly affects how opportunities are perceived and new ventures are initiated. This influence is particularly evident in the recognition of stereotyping and underscores the significant role played by various forms of capital, including financial, social, human, and cultural capital, in shaping their individual goals and pursuit of success within the urban marketplace.

7.4.1 The Influence of West Midlands Institutional Structure on Goal Setting and Realisation

This section thoroughly discusses how the institutional context of the West Midlands shapes the development and diversification of businesses owned by BAIEs. It scrutinises the effects of societal, cultural, and economic factors on the expansion and diversification initiatives of businesses within the BAIE community in the urban regional context.

The UK migrant population, particularly Black African immigrants, continues to grapple with inequalities and marginalisation deeply embedded in societal culture and perpetuated through various structures and systems (Powell and Menendian, 2016; Pan et al., 2019; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). As argued by Powell and Menendian (2016), the pervasive phenomenon of social identity-based othering has created a self-perpetuating cycle, hindering the progress of Black African immigrants in the UK and, consequently, limiting their full entrepreneurial potential. In the urban environment of the West Midlands, the development and diversification strategies of BAIEs face constraints imposed by ethnic enclaves. Kaperová et al. (2022) suggest that targeted policy interventions have the potential to break these constraints and enhance opportunities for BAIEs to integrate into the broader economic and social landscape.

Conversely, there exist deficiencies in the delivery of entrepreneurial assistance and its efficacy, consistent with the appraisals posited by Waldinger et al. (1990) and Deakins and Freel (2012). Kaperová et al. (2022) assert that the enduring and viable delivery of assistance is contingent upon establishing equitable conditions for all entrepreneurs, including those of Black African descent, to engage in unrestricted competition, which can be achieved by addressing prejudicial,

discriminatory, and inequitable practices through government policy interventions and enforcement measures.

Modern communities are multicultural, and despite regional patterning that excluded groups from developmental urbanisation, the integration, and effects of these varied cultures on mainstream society are increasingly prevalent (Krueger et al., 2013). In the West Midlands, socio-economic exclusion demonstrated a separation of status which relegated migrants to specific enclaves and regional environments based on their access to sufficient financial resources. Further, the habitus described by Cooper (2021) meant that there is cultural conditioning among Black African immigrants in the West Midlands to value the pooled resources, including patterns of behaviour related to retail exchanges, dining, and entertainment. Although the broader UK economy influences the entrepreneurial processes of individuals, the resources acquired through a cultural economy condition the entrepreneurial goals of migrant entrepreneurs.

In a domestic assessment of intra-industry patterns of entrepreneurial development in Ghana, Dorcas et al. (2021) revealed that experience provided awareness of critical government regulations and statutes, allowing individuals with practical knowledge and high-level education to accelerate the growth from concept to a viable business model. However, it was evident in such findings that because of the regional benchmarking and similarities surrounding entrepreneurial knowledge and experience, the accessibility of the market itself and the ability to establish and sustain a business was determined by expert knowledge advantages (Dorcas et al., 2021). As these entrepreneurs fill an industry and redefine the underlying technologies, the role of community integration is manifest, gradually stimulating progression as more actors participate in the same technologies and capabilities. A similar patterning of entrepreneurial primacy was observed in the current empirical findings, whereby extending business opportunities beyond the narrow limitations of a simplified box or market standard (e.g. the same ethnic retail stores, the same fabric offerings) allowed entrepreneurs to thrive in the UK and narrowed the gaps between the more traditional domestic markets and the regional effects shaping ethnic motivations and in-group dependencies.

The current findings challenge the work of Morales et al. (2019), who attempted to distil their quantitative findings into a validation of entrepreneurship in collective, highly egalitarian societies. Conceptually, this proposition contradicts the idea of entrepreneurial activities, which are fundamentally independent, supported by a limited number of self-acquired resources, and adapted according to personal vision and economic goal setting. Whereas Morales et al. (2019) suggested that egalitarianism encouraged by social capital allows entrepreneurs to thrive, it is the result of these findings that a more destructive conclusion can be drawn: Black African immigrants in the West

Midlands urban environment were forced into entrepreneurship because of their condition as marginalised populations, encouraged to pursue business opportunities relative to their own historic skill sets, and driven by a personal socio-economic motivation to achieve in the UK. It was consensus throughout the participant responses that only some individuals were provided with funding or the financial resources to build their business by their community or social capital links. Instead, these individuals bootstrapped, established connections where available, and utilised opportunity-based relationships to expand their businesses beyond their originating enclaves.

Empirical evidence from research studies by Pan et al. (2019) and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021) supports the idea that group-based identity has a positive impact on entrepreneurial orientation. Powell and Menendian (2016) underscore that a sense of belonging through self-categorisation can promote inclusivity and cohesiveness within communities, enhancing competitiveness and productivity. This suggests that in various Black African cultures, the strong sociability and community orientation of these populations may pose challenges to entrepreneurial innovation and adaptation, especially when faced with resource gaps or structural limitations. Comparison across the sample populations in this study provides evidence that confirms and validates the points.

> **Proposition VI:** In the urban landscape of the West Midlands, marked by substantial independence, modernity, and multiculturalism, BAIEs may discover an environment that supports self-directed entrepreneurial endeavours, diminishing their dependence on community involvement or guidance. Nonetheless, cultural enclaves might introduce social and strategic limitations on these entrepreneurs' exploration of economic opportunities, prioritising stability, and gradual growth over promoting innovation and rapid business development.

7.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter delved into the profound consequences of social identity-based exclusion experienced by historically marginalised groups, specifically Black African immigrants in the urban landscape of the West Midlands. It uncovers a self-perpetuating cycle that obstructs their development across various life domains, particularly in entrepreneurial endeavours. The chapter discussed the complex interplay of social identity, self-categorisation, various forms of capital, and institutional factors influencing the entrepreneurial journey of BAIEs. This exploration revealed the complex dynamics shaping the challenges faced by BAIEs within the West Midlands' competitive and saturated urban marketplace. Despite diverse perspectives, a prevalent theme emerges– incomplete opportunism resulting from systemic limitations that hinder the recognition of opportunities and the

creation of new ventures in the competitive urban marketplace. The narratives from the experiences of Black African immigrants reveal diverse entrepreneurial pathways and challenges, creating a complex mosaic that reflects the heterogeneity of intentions amidst situational and contextual forces. Drawing on traits such as resilience, cognitive adaptability, creativity, and social leverage, this research predicts the likelihood of success for Black African immigrants in an urban marketplace marked by persistent systemic and competitive pressures, affecting the long-term achievement of developmental goals. Additionally, recognising the inherent subjectivity in both this research and the propositions articulated in this chapter underscores the necessity of maintaining openness to adjustments grounded in nuanced contextual insights. This approach contributes a diverse array of perspectives to the broader discourse on immigrant entrepreneurship in urban settings, thereby emphasising the importance of achieving a comprehensive understanding.

8 Chapter – Conclusions and Implications of the Research Study

8.1 Introduction

This study delved into the entrepreneurial endeavours of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban context, specifically focusing on the aspects of opportunity recognition and new venture creation. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design and narrative inquiry, the research conducted ten semi-structured interviews with BAIEs to comprehensively explore their experiences in these domains. Chapter 6 details the presentation and analysis of the study results, while Chapter 7 engages in a discussion, drawing comparisons with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks established in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. This concluding chapter encapsulates the research, emphasising its contributions to knowledge, outlining limitations, and scrutinising implications for practice, policy, and future research, in alignment with the study's fifth research objective.

8.2 Revisiting Research Aim, Questions, and Objectives

This research study explored the complexities of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the urban setting of the West Midlands. The study provided a narrative insight into the experiences of these entrepreneurs as they initiate and grow their businesses. The research was guided by four key questions:

1. How do BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands identify opportunities and translate them into new business ventures?
2. What motivates BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands to transform opportunities into new business ventures?
3. How do BAIEs establish their entrepreneurial objectives within the urban landscape of the West Midlands?
4. In what ways does the institutional structure of the West Midlands influence the processes of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs?

The research objectives were designed to effectively address these questions.

- To understand the phenomena of migrant entrepreneurship and opportunity seeking, with a specific emphasis on the challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands.
- To explore the individual experiences of BAIEs within the urban environment of the West Midlands, with a particular focus on the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation.
- To describe how the institutional structure of the West Midlands impacts the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs.
- To identify implications for both theory development and practical applications in the context of Black African entrepreneurship in the urban landscape of the West Midlands.

8.3 Research Conclusions

This study provides a nuanced exploration into the entrepreneurial activities of Black African immigrants in the West Midlands urban context, offering valuable insights from the unique perspective of the entrepreneur. The challenges encountered in recruiting individuals of Black African descent, as acknowledged by Nwankwo et al. (2011), are further complicated by the complexities associated with small and micro enterprises (Simpson et al., 2012).

The conceptual framework employed in this research is multi-faceted, encompassing social identity, self-categorisation theory, various forms of capital, and institutional theory. In a departure from predominant literature focusing on the mixed embeddedness theory in migrant entrepreneurship, this study introduces a novel perspective by emphasising the interplay between social identity, self-categorisation, diverse forms of capital (such as economic, social, and cultural capital), and institutional influences. This comprehensive approach posits that understanding these interconnected aspects is paramount in explaining the social and economic status of BAIEs within complex and prejudiced social frameworks.

Individuals of Black African descent, influenced by subconscious affiliation and systemic categorisation, tend to align with categorical definitions reflecting their self-concept. This alignment significantly impacts decision-making processes, especially in complex developmental contexts such as identifying opportunities, establishing businesses, and executing plans. Drawing on the works of Powell and Menendian (2016), Pan et al. (2019), and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021), the study

underscores the importance of recognising one's identity in accessing and using a range of diverse forms of capital within the complex landscape of networking and community involvement.

The incorporation of social identity, self-categorisation theory, diverse forms of capital, and institutional theory represent a unique and enriching contribution to the understanding of Black African immigrant entrepreneurship. Motivation emerges as a fundamental factor influencing opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment. The key findings underscore the significance of prior knowledge, particularly experience and education in a specific industry, in the processes of recognising opportunities and creating new ventures. Institutional factors, encompassing regulative, normative, and cognitive dimensions, are identified as significant influencers. Participants express concerns about limiting systems, with societal values, norms, customs, and perceptions shaping cognitive processes, ambitions, and self-assurance in entrepreneurial pursuits.

Networks, comprising familial, social, occupational, and commercial networks, emerge as crucial influences in identifying opportunities and establishing new business ventures. The study underlines the impact of subjective experiences on the economic advancement of entrepreneurs, highlighting both compelling and limiting factors. Cultural economy, collective heritage, and legacy dependency impose constraints, but individuals demonstrate resilience and adaptability in transforming challenges into business opportunities. The subjective interpretation of group constructs, biases, and values influences the stereotyping process and self-categorisation, as demonstrated by Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021).

Overall, this research significantly advances our understanding of Black African immigrant entrepreneurship by weaving together social identity, self-categorisation, diverse forms of capital, and institutional theory. The nuanced exploration of these interconnected elements contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape, offering insights that extend beyond existing frameworks in migrant entrepreneurship literature. The integration of diverse theories enriches the theoretical framework, providing a holistic view of the factors influencing the entrepreneurial journeys of BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment. This holistic understanding paves the way for more targeted and effective interventions, policies, and support mechanisms to promote inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial development within this unique demographic context.

8.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study, grounded in a phenomenological orientation and narrative inquiry, offers substantial contributions to the field of entrepreneurship by exploring the entrepreneurial journeys of BAIEs. These contributions span three critical dimensions: contextual, theoretical, and methodological.

8.4.1 Contextual Contributions

The contextual contributions of this research are grounded in a focused exploration of the entrepreneurial journeys of BAIEs within the unique urban environment of the West Midlands region, particularly Birmingham. This strategic choice aligns with the visionary goals of the region, committed to promoting inclusive and sustainable growth (Birmingham City Council, 2022). By concentrating on Birmingham, the study unveils the challenges, gaps, and opportunities that shape the experiences of BAIEs, particularly in the face of bias and discrimination prevalent in the city (Nkwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019).

One key contextual contribution lies in the acknowledgment and examination of the specific challenges faced by BAIEs in Birmingham. By delving into the socio-economic landscape of the city, the research surpasses the scope of previous studies, offering a nuanced understanding of how the urban environment influences the entrepreneurial approaches of both first- and second-generation BAIEs (Nkwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019). This nuanced exploration is crucial for capturing the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurial experiences within a locale marked by unique socio-economic dynamics.

The research's focus on Birmingham allows for a contextualised analysis of how bias and discrimination impact the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Understanding the local nuances and challenges faced by BAIEs in this urban environment contributes not only to academic knowledge but also provides practical insights that can inform policy decisions and support initiatives tailored to the specific needs of the Birmingham community (Nkwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019).

In summary, the contextual contributions of this research extend beyond a generic exploration of immigrant entrepreneurship by providing a detailed and locale-specific analysis of the entrepreneurial journeys of BAIEs in Birmingham. This approach enriches our understanding of the interplay between socio-economic factors and entrepreneurial dynamics, offering valuable insights for addressing challenges and promoting a more supportive environment for BAIEs in the West Midlands region.

8.4.2 Theoretical Contributions

This research study makes significant theoretical contributions by employing frameworks such as social identity theory, self-categorisation theory, forms of capital, and institutional theory. Drawing on social identity theory, the study explores how BAIEs construct and define their entrepreneurial identities within the unique context of the West Midlands urban landscape, contributing to the understanding of how social categorisation influences the identification and pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). This research extends the application of self-categorisation theory by exploring how BAIEs categorise themselves within the entrepreneurial landscape, examining the impact of such self-categorisation on their roles, perceptions, and their ability to recognise and seize opportunities (Turner et al., 1987).

Forms of capital are integrated into the research to analyse the diverse resources– economic, social, human, and cultural– that BAIEs leverage in their entrepreneurial pursuits in the West Midlands. This contribution expands existing knowledge by elucidating the interplay of different forms of capital and their influence on opportunity recognition and venture creation within the specific socio-cultural and economic context of the urban environment (Bourdieu, 1986). Institutional theory serves as a theoretical lens to examine how institutional factors in the West Midlands shape the opportunities and challenges encountered by BAIEs. The research contributes by exploring the impact of both formal and informal institutions on the entrepreneurial processes, shedding light on the adaptive strategies employed by BAIEs in response to institutional dynamics (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Building on the work of scholars such as Pan et al. (2019) and Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia (2021), the study emphasises the theoretical dimensions of perseverance and resiliency in the context of BAIEs in the West Midlands. It explores how these traits, traditionally viewed as individual characteristics, are shaped, and influenced by the socio-cultural and systemic dynamics specific to the urban environment, providing a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial development (Nkwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2021). Additionally, by framing the research within the narrative pathways pursued by BAIEs, the study contributes a unique theoretical perspective. By focusing on the stories and experiences of BAIEs, the research provides insights into how these individuals navigate the entrepreneurial landscape in a city marked by bias and discrimination, thus enriching the broader literature on immigrant entrepreneurship.

8.4.3 Methodological Contributions

Methodologically, this research adopts a phenomenological design and narrative inquiry to capture a momentary representation of collective history through the biographical accounts of primary agents responsible for business founding and development (Van Manen, 2016). Recognising the challenges in collecting primary evidence, especially through interviews, the study emphasises the need to explicitly state the contextual and situational forces shaping respondents' experiences. This transparency, informed by Nwankwo et al. (2011) and Ojo's (2019) insights, enhances the robustness of the findings. The utilisation of multi-perspective representation in capturing the experiences of BAIEs contributes to the transparency and depth of the research. Thematic codes specific to the Birmingham urban context are developed, establishing a methodological foundation for understanding Black African immigrant entrepreneurship in the West Midlands. Additionally, the study's triangulation of findings with core theories from prior researchers, such as Tajfel and Turner (1986), Turner et al. (1987), and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) not only contribute to achieving the final research objective but also presents propositions for sustainable business development.

8.5 Research Limitations

Despite efforts to establish methods and data analysis techniques that would provide meaningful outcomes and insights while avoiding the pitfalls of other methods and approaches, this study was subject to several specific limitations. Several sampling limitations were acknowledged when conducting this study, including scale, diversity, and focus.

Scalar limitations were incumbent in the sampling approach (snowballing, opportunistic) adopted for this study, particularly when considering the accessibility of the Black African migrant entrepreneurial population in the UK. Prior research by Nwankwo (2005) has highlighted how many Black African immigrants in the UK have undertaken entrepreneurial activities to overcome systemic discrimination and opportunity limitations within the domestic ecosystem. Further research by Ekwulugo (2006) and Ojo (2013, 2019) has focused on high-traffic urban centres, namely London, because of the more significant opportunities associated with population concentration and high-impact (e.g. advanced technology) business startups. However, with recent engagement within the Birmingham community, evidence suggests that small business development is a priority for government agencies and local support groups seeking to empower and accelerate Black-owned enterprises (Hyatt, 2020). Therefore, the sampling limitation applied to this study was constrictive but focused, highlighting the specific advantages of a small research sample from the phenomenological perspective of collective narrative storytelling.

The diversity limitation applied to this study was based upon experience within the pilot study that combined results from Nigerian and Somali participants. Despite their similar continental origins, these participants' socio-cultural and religious backgrounds were diverse and fragmented any attempts to combine motivational or institutional narratives. In psychology, Feczko et al. (2019: 584) refer to this problem as the "heterogeneity problem", a diversification effect that weighs causal and experiential interpretations differently despite similar outcomes or origins. In the sociological study, Straiton et al. (2017) observed a roles-based heterogeneity problem as women from similar ethnic backgrounds were conditioned by varied roles and responsibilities in a similar socio-cultural landscape. Heterogeneity can limit cross-sectional comparisons, mainly when the narrative arc is restricted by race or country of origin. Therefore, diversity was purposefully limited for this study, framing the empirical focus around BAIEs from Sub-Saharan Africa who currently reside in Birmingham city, the heart of the West Midlands region of the UK.

Finally, there was a limitation of focus to specific challenges previously identified by researchers such as Nwankwo (2005), Ekwulugo (2006), and Ojo (2013; 2019), strategically leveraging these insights to deepen the examination of BAIEs in the UK. Informed by critical theories including social identity, self-categorisation, forms of capital, and institutional theory, the research explored the complex interplay between self-actualisation and systemic challenges faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands urban environment. The interview instrument was meticulously designed with a precise focus on probing into the dimensions of opportunity recognition and the processes involved in new venture creation within the distinctive context of BAIEs. By deliberately narrowing its scope to previously revealed issues, the research aimed to provide a targeted and comprehensive analysis, contributing nuanced insights to the understanding of critical theoretical frameworks and their implications for the entrepreneurial experiences of the UK Black African immigrant community.

8.6 Implications of the Research Study

The theoretical propositions derived from this study pave the way for practical and policy implications, shaping the landscape of migrant entrepreneurship. These implications, rooted in the theoretical framework encompassing social identity, self-categorisation, forms of capital, and institutional theory, offer insights that can drive meaningful interventions and promote inclusive entrepreneurial development. Additionally, these implications provoke considerations for future research endeavours.

8.6.1 Implications for Practice

The research study explores crucial themes with direct implications for practitioners engaged with BAIEs in the West Midlands region. The findings offer actionable insights aimed at enhancing support structures and promoting entrepreneurial success within this community. The identified themes include (i) promoting education and skill development, (ii) recognising and leveraging work experience for BAIEs, (iii) empowering BAIEs through financial literacy and accessible financing, (iv) bridge community support with long-term entrepreneurial goals, (v) cultivating cultural sensitivity, and (vi) empowering prospective BAIEs through entrepreneurship awareness programs.

Promoting Education and Skill Development for BAIEs

To enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of BAIEs, a targeted and collaborative approach is essential. This strategic initiative focuses on implementing specialised training programs tailored to the unique needs of BAIEs, with a specific emphasis on education and skill development (Nkwankwo, 2005; Kabote, 2020). Collaborating with educational institutions forms the foundation of this endeavour, allowing for the creation of industry-centric courses and workshops. For instance, partnerships with universities and vocational training centres can result in the development of tailored programs aligned with the educational backgrounds of BAIEs, such as IT and Accounting/Finance.

Active involvement of industry experts further enriches the training programs, ensuring real-world relevance and practical applicability. Workshops and guest lectures conducted by professionals (e.g., IT and Accounting/Finance sectors) bring valuable insights and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and entrepreneurial application. These initiatives extend beyond traditional classroom settings, incorporating hands-on activities and practical exercises to provide a comprehensive learning experience. Flexibility and inclusivity are key considerations, with options like flexible scheduling, online learning, and multilingual support making educational opportunities accessible to a diverse range of BAIEs.

Recognising and Leveraging Work Experience for BAIEs

Advocating for the recognition and appreciation of the work experience of BAIEs is integral to promoting seamless transitions into entrepreneurship. Emphasising the value of prior job experience becomes a cornerstone in equipping BAIEs with essential skills, insights, and networks crucial for their success in entrepreneurial ventures (Domboka, 2013; Ojo, 2019). This advocacy calls for the establishment of programs that explicitly acknowledge the relevance of work experience, creating

pathways for BAIEs to harness their professional backgrounds in shaping their entrepreneurial trajectories.

Encouraging partnerships with businesses willing to provide mentorship opportunities stands out as a practical avenue for supporting BAIEs in leveraging their work experience. Collaborative initiatives with companies in sectors aligning with BAIEs' interests, such as IT or Accounting/Finance, can yield tailor-made mentorship programs. Such partnerships not only validate the importance of work experience but also provide BAIEs with valuable guidance, industry-specific knowledge, and a supportive network as they navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship. This mentorship-centric approach aligns with the understanding that recognising and valuing work experience is not just a formality but a strategic investment in the entrepreneurial success of BAIEs.

Empowering BAIEs through Financial Literacy and Accessible Institutional Financing

Empowering BAIEs necessitates a multifaceted approach centred on financial literacy and accessible pathways to institutional financing. A crucial component of this strategy involves the development of specialised financial literacy programs, complexly designed to address the unique challenges faced by BAIEs in managing their finances, understanding investment strategies, and navigating the complexities of institutional financing (Nkwankwo, 2005; Ojo, 2019). These programs aim to elevate the financial acumen of BAIEs, providing them with the knowledge and skills required to make informed and strategic decisions throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

Collaboration with financial institutions forms a pivotal element in creating accessible pathways for BAIEs to secure start-up funds. By promoting partnerships with these institutions, initiatives can be established, ranging from educational workshops to direct interaction with financial experts. This collaborative effort not only demystifies the financial processes for BAIEs but also ensures a direct link between aspiring entrepreneurs and the financial resources necessary for their ventures. Recognising the diversity in funding approaches among BAIEs, whether through personal resources or family support, underscores the importance of tailoring financial literacy programs to accommodate these varied approaches. In doing so, this initiative aims to empower BAIEs with the knowledge and resources essential for navigating the financial landscape and successfully securing start-up funds for their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Bridging Community Support with Long-Term Entrepreneurial Goals

To strengthen the support system for BAIEs, a focused strategy involves the promotion of mentorship programs that effectively bridge the gap between community support dynamics and the

broader entrepreneurial ecosystem. Acknowledging the crucial role that community support plays in the initial phases of entrepreneurial endeavours, this initiative seeks to align short-term community benefits with long-term entrepreneurial aspirations (Kloosterman and Rath, 2001; Ojo, 2013). The foundation of this endeavour lies in the establishment of mentorship platforms designed to connect BAIEs with experienced mentors spanning diverse industries. These mentors serve as invaluable guides, imparting insights, wisdom, and practical advice derived from their own entrepreneurial journeys. By facilitating these mentor-mentee relationships, practitioners aim to offer BAIEs a more comprehensive perspective on entrepreneurship, extending beyond the confines of their immediate community.

Furthermore, these mentorship programs play a strategic role in mitigating potential drawbacks associated with an excessive reliance on community support. While community assistance provides immediate benefits, it may inadvertently promote limitations or insular networks that impede long-term growth. Engaging BAIEs with mentors from diverse backgrounds ensures exposure to a broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, promoting adaptability, innovation, and a nuanced understanding of the broader marketplace.

Cultivating Cultural Sensitivity

An essential element of bolstering support for BAIEs involves the targeted development of cultural sensitivity training for practitioners. This initiative seeks to furnish practitioners with the necessary knowledge and understanding to navigate the nuanced cultural engagement of BAIEs, ensuring that the support offered aligns with long-term entrepreneurial goals and mitigates potential developmental restrictions associated with social identity and self-categorisation (Pan et al., 2019; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). At the core of this endeavour is a comprehensive cultural sensitivity training program designed to enlighten practitioners about the diverse cultural backgrounds, values, and traditions of BAIEs. By promoting a deeper understanding of the complexities of their cultural engagement, practitioners can customise their support to resonate positively with the cultural identities of BAIEs.

Furthermore, armed with cultural sensitivity knowledge, practitioners can actively work towards mitigating potential developmental restrictions tied to ‘othering’ (Powell and Menendian, 2016; Rashid and Cepeda-Garcia, 2021). Understanding how this dynamic may influence decision-making, aspirations, and networking preferences is crucial for providing support that promotes resilience, adaptability, and a healthy entrepreneurial mindset. By aligning their assistance with the cultural complexities of BAIEs, practitioners contribute to an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that

embraces diversity and empowers BAIEs to navigate the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship with cultural pride.

Empowering Prospective BAIEs through Entrepreneurship Awareness Programs

To empower prospective BAIEs in the UK, there is a strategic initiative to establish entrepreneurship awareness programs. These programs play a pivotal role in bridging the information gap by providing comprehensive insights into the complexities of entrepreneurship, addressing potential challenges specific to the Black African immigrant community, and outlining available support systems (Ojo, 2021). Practitioners spearheading these initiatives aim to equip prospective BAIEs with the essential knowledge and tools necessary for informed decision-making, promoting a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape.

The core focus of these awareness programs is to demystify the entrepreneurial journey for individuals within the Black African immigrant community. Collaboratively developed informative sessions delve into the unique challenges they may encounter, such as cultural nuances, resource accessibility, and potential barriers. By offering a holistic perspective on the entrepreneurial landscape, practitioners enable prospective BAIEs to navigate their entrepreneurial journey with greater clarity and confidence. Furthermore, these programs serve as dynamic platforms for promoting community engagement and building networks.

8.6.2 Implications for Policy

The study's implications for policy formulation underscore the need for a targeted and nuanced approach to support BAIEs within the broader context of migrant entrepreneurship (Ram et al., 2017; Solano et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2022; Kašperová et al., 2022). Crafting policies that specifically address the individual experiences of BAIEs in the West Midlands is crucial for promoting an environment conducive to opportunity recognition and new venture creation. The identified themes include (i) strategic tailoring of support services to BAIEs, (ii) coaching support and entrepreneurial programs, (ii) engagement of business support organisations, (iii) engagement of business support organisations, and (iv) awareness and outreach.

Strategic Tailoring of Support Services for BAIEs

A strategic initiative to enhance the success of BAIEs involves the implementation of precisely tailored support services addressing their distinctive challenges (Ram et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2022). Central to this strategy is the formation of specialised advisory panels, bringing together BAIE

entrepreneurs, community leaders, and policymakers. These panels serve as dynamic platforms actively shaping the design and execution of support services, ensuring their direct relevance and effectiveness in meeting the specific needs of BAIEs.

This innovative approach transcends conventional support models by incorporating firsthand experiences and insights from BAIE entrepreneurs into the decision-making processes. The inclusion of community leaders and policymakers in these panels promotes a collaborative and comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by BAIEs. This participatory framework ensures that support services are not solely driven by academic or institutional perspectives but are deeply rooted in the lived experiences of BAIEs within their community. Beyond addressing cultural nuances, these tailored support services encompass mentorship programs, financial assistance initiatives, and networking opportunities uniquely designed to cater to the diverse needs of BAIEs.

Coaching Support and Entrepreneurial Programs

Developing coaching support programs and entrepreneurial initiatives that cater to the specific needs of BAIEs is a strategic imperative for policymakers aiming to promote entrepreneurial success (Ram et al., 2017; Kaperová et al., 2022). In collaboration with entrepreneurship experts and BAIEs, policymakers can design mentorship programs that offer targeted guidance and insights. These mentorship initiatives become a crucial avenue for transferring practical knowledge, addressing industry-specific challenges, and providing valuable advice based on the real-world experiences of successful entrepreneurs within the BAIE community. Workshops tailored to identified challenges can further augment these efforts, offering a structured learning environment where BAIEs can acquire skills and strategies to navigate complexities such as securing funding and understanding market entry dynamics.

Networking events stand out as essential components of coaching support programs, serving as platforms to connect BAIEs with each other and established professionals. Policymakers should collaborate with local business organisations to organise events that facilitate meaningful interactions, collaboration, and the exchange of experiences. This networking-centric approach ensures that BAIEs not only receive guidance but also become part of a supportive community that understands their unique entrepreneurial journey. Through these collaborative initiatives, policymakers contribute to the creation of an ecosystem that empowers BAIEs, allowing them to overcome challenges, tap into opportunities, and thrive in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Engagement of Business Support Organisations

Promoting the active engagement of local and regional business support organisations with BAIEs is a pivotal strategy for policymakers seeking to enhance the inclusivity of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Solano et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2022). Policymakers can play a facilitative role by encouraging these organisations to organise targeted workshops and networking events specifically designed for BAIE entrepreneurs. These events should provide platforms for mutual understanding, collaboration, and relationship-building between BAIEs and support organisations. Through these initiatives, policymakers aim to bridge gaps in awareness, knowledge, and access that BAIEs might face when navigating the complexities of the entrepreneurial landscape.

Workshops organised in collaboration with business support organisations can cover a spectrum of topics, including accessing funding opportunities, understanding regulatory frameworks, and leveraging available resources. These events become invaluable opportunities for BAIEs to gain insights into the local business environment and connect with organisations offering tailored support services. Networking events further facilitate the establishment of meaningful connections between BAIE entrepreneurs, business support organisations, and other stakeholders. By promoting a sense of community and shared objectives, policymakers contribute to breaking down barriers, combatting stereotypes, and creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that actively supports the growth and success of BAIE ventures.

Awareness and Outreach

Implementing comprehensive awareness and outreach initiatives emerges as a pivotal strategy for policymakers seeking to cultivate an informed and engaged BAIE community (Kaperová et al., 2022). Policymakers can strategically design and execute awareness campaigns targeting both BAIEs and the broader community. Collaborative efforts with community leaders, local media outlets, and educational institutions serve as instrumental channels for disseminating essential information regarding available support services, government initiatives, and opportunities accessible to BAIEs. This collaborative approach capitalises on the influence and trust vested in community leaders, overcoming potential communication barriers related to language and cultural nuances that might impede effective outreach. Local media partnerships become instrumental in amplifying the reach of these campaigns through diverse channels, including radio, television, newspapers, and digital platforms. Success stories, available resources, and achievements of BAIEs can be highlighted to promote a positive narrative about the community's entrepreneurial contributions. Additionally, policymakers can integrate awareness programs into educational curricula, ensuring that younger

generations are informed about the support mechanisms available for aspiring BAIEs.

8.6.3 Implications for Future Research

The limitations outlined in this study provide valuable insights for future research, highlighting areas that could be addressed to enhance the robustness and generalisability of findings. Here are some considerations for future research based on the identified limitations:

Sampling Strategy: Future studies could consider employing a more diverse sampling strategy that captures a broader range of BAIEs in the UK. This may involve reaching out to different cities or regions with distinct characteristics and opportunities. Furthermore, these studies could explore alternative sampling methods that go beyond snowballing and opportunistic approaches, ensuring a more representative sample. This could involve collaborating with community organisations, government agencies, or business networks to access a more comprehensive participant pool.

Diversity Dimension: Future studies should acknowledge and embrace the diversity within the Black African immigrant entrepreneurial population, recognising the nuanced socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. Future research could adopt a more inclusive approach by studying subgroups separately, allowing for a richer understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities each subgroup faces. For instance, researchers might explore the experiences of BAIEs from West African countries as a distinct subgroup. Furthermore, these studies could examine how intersectionality influences entrepreneurial experiences by considering factors such as gender, age, and educational background within the BAIE population.

Geographic Variation: Future studies could expand the geographic scope of the study beyond a single city (Birmingham) to capture variations in entrepreneurial experiences across different regions. This could involve comparing urban and rural settings, as well as areas with varying levels of government support for small business development.

Comparative Studies: Future studies could focus on comparative studies between different ethnic groups or immigrant populations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs relative to other groups. Furthermore, conducting comparative studies among West African countries, such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, can help illuminate the distinctive experiences of BAIEs. Examining historical and cultural influences within these

specific countries can provide valuable insights into the varied challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Temporal Considerations: Future studies should recognise that entrepreneurial ecosystems evolve over time. These research studies could be based on longitudinal studies to track the progress and changes in the experiences of BAIEs, considering the impact of evolving socio-economic and political conditions.

Broader Theoretical Frameworks: Future studies could expand the theoretical frameworks beyond the ones identified in previous research. Incorporate emerging theories or interdisciplinary approaches that may provide a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between self-actualisation and systemic challenges.

Mixed-Methods Approach: Future studies could combine qualitative and quantitative methods to triangulate findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial experiences of Black African immigrants in the UK. Quantitative data could help identify patterns and relationships, complementing the qualitative insights obtained through narrative storytelling.

Policy Implications: Future studies could investigate the impact of government policies and local support initiatives on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship. These studies could analyse the effectiveness of existing programs and identify potential areas for improvement to better empower and accelerate Black-owned enterprises.

Addressing these considerations in future research can contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and dynamics within the Black African migrant entrepreneurial community in the UK.

The document comprises **61,822** words, excluding the cover, declaration, acknowledgement, dedication, abstract, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, references, and appendices.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Changes to Research Aim, Questions, and Objectives

Research Aim Before Modification	**Research Aim After Modification**
The overall aim of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of UK-based Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs operating within the urban market economy.	This research study aims to explore the complexities of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs in the urban setting of the West Midlands. The study provides a narrative insight into the experiences of these entrepreneurs as they initiate and grow their businesses.
Research Question Before Modification	**Research Questions After Modification**
• What are the contributing factors to success for UK-based Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs operating within the urban market economy?	• How do BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands identify opportunities and translate them into new business ventures? • What motivates BAIEs in the urban environment of the West Midlands to transform opportunities into new business ventures? • How do BAIEs establish their entrepreneurial objectives within the urban landscape of the West Midlands? • In what ways does the institutional structure of the West Midlands influence the processes of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs?
Research Objectives Before Modification	**Research Objectives After Modification**
• To understand the contributory factors for success in view of BAIEs operating within the urban market economy. • To extrapolate the factors for success. • To identify implications for theory development and practice.	• To understand the phenomena of migrant entrepreneurship and opportunity seeking, with a specific emphasis on the challenges and opportunities faced by BAIEs in the West Midlands.

	• To explore the individual experiences of BAIEs within the urban environment of the West Midlands, with a particular focus on the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation. • To describe how the institutional structure of the West Midlands impacts the process of opportunity recognition and new venture creation among BAIEs. • To identify implications for both theory development and practical applications in the context of Black African entrepreneurship in the urban landscape of the West Midlands,

Appendix B**:** Participant Information Sheet

Dear Owner-manager,

Participant Information Sheet

Re: Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation: A Narrative Inquiry into Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the West Midlands Urban Environment

I would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this information and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us.

1. **What is the purpose of the study?**

The study examines Black African immigrant entrepreneurship in the West Midlands. Various scholars argue that Black Africans are the least studied ethnic minority group in the UK and there is little knowledge on their entrepreneurial activities. The last full assessment of the UK census in 2011 indicates that Black-African immigrants have grown rapidly over two decades, from 0.9% to 3% of the national total population, however, the limited history on Black-Africans has made it quite challenging for scholars to access previous literature on their entrepreneurial practices, which has partly left the knowledge of Black-African immigrant entrepreneurship skewed and has called for the temptation to make unstable generalisations about Black African immigrant entrepreneurship. Evidence in the literature shows that Black Africans are beginning to shift from lower growth industry sectors to higher growth industry sectors such as IT consultancy, fashion design, graphic design, software design, private health care, financial services, and broadcasting. However, some scholars argue that majority of these Black African immigrant entrepreneurs fail as a result to racial bias, lack of finance, diversification issues, particularistic practices, lack of strategic awareness, and low entrepreneurial intensity.

The overall aim of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs operating within the urban market economy. One of the expected outputs of this research is to develop a conceptual framework for the success factors of Black African immigrant entrepreneurs in urban markets within the West Midlands.

2. What are the research objectives?

- To understand the contributory factors for success in view of BAIEs operating within the urban market economy.
- To extrapolate the factors for success.
- To identify implications for theory development and practice.

3. Why have I been chosen for the study?

You have been chosen because as a Black African immigrant entrepreneur operating in the urban market within the West Midlands, your opinions about success factors for entrepreneurship will be useful, as well as your experiences in the urban market, in relation to the identified success factors.

4. Do I have to take part in the study, and can I withdraw from the study at any time?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part in the study. If you do decide to take part in the study, you will be able to keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement to the consent form. You can still withdraw at any time, and you do not have to give a reason. However, you may not be able to withdraw when data is fully merged and unable to be extracted (i.e. when the research study has been completed and submitted to Birmingham City University Doctoral College).

5. What will happen to me if I decide to take part?

You will be interviewed online via MS Team or any other platform which you suggest that meets the General Data Protection Regulation. I anticipate that the interview will last approximately one hour, maybe a little longer, depending on your interest and participation.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part in the study?

A potential risk to participants is COVID19, and this is being mitigated by collecting data through online interviews. Furthermore, participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be

the same as any experienced in everyday life (for example: fatigue, tiredness, and stress). If you get tired during the interview process, the interview can be rescheduled at another time and at your convenience.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part in the study?

- The research findings will enhance current research on Black African immigrant entrepreneurship in the West Midlands. It will give new insights with quality information on the factors that influence the success of Black African immigrant entrepreneurs in the West Midlands.
- The research will create an effective framework for policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and potential or existing Black African immigrant entrepreneurs in the West Midlands.
- The research study can provide entrepreneurs with the knowledge and direction of how to manage and carry out their business operations in a way that will make them successful.

8. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded file be used?

The interview will be audio recorded on MS Teams or any other platform that complies with the General Data Protection Regulation. The recorded file will be transferred to BCU one drive and permanently deleted from the platform. Furthermore, the audio recording will be transcribed on word document and analysed. The result will be used for PhD thesis, academic publications, and presentation at conferences.

9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The audio file will be downloaded and stored in BCU one drive, and permanently deleted from MS Team or any other platform that was used. The information you provide may be shared in an anonymised form to allow reuse by the research team and other third parties. These anonymised data will not allow any individuals or their business name to be identified or identifiable. In other words, any name identified will be fictitious.

10. Who will have access to the recorded file?

Only the research team will have access to the recorded file. The people in the team include: Tamaralaiyefa Tiemo, Doctoral researcher, Birmingham City University; Prof. Alexandros

Psychogios, Professor of international HRM, Birmingham City University; and Dr Susan Sisay, DBA Programme Director, Birmingham City University.

11. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The interview will focus on your opinions in relation to the success factors for entrepreneurship, as well as your experiences operating in the mainstream market, in relation to the identified success factors.

12. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

The Birmingham City University's ethics committee has ethically reviewed this project.

Given the above information, I would therefore deeply appreciate your kind consideration to participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,
Tamaralaiyefa Tiemo
Doctoral Researcher
Email: Tamaralaiyefa.Tiemo@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Feel free to contact Prof Alexandros Psychogios **'OR'** Dr Susan Sisay in the event of any questions, as well as if there is any dissatisfaction with the study.

Director of Research Study
Alexandros Psychogios
Email: Alexandros.Psychogios@bcu.ac.uk

Primary Research Supervisor
Dr Susan Sisay
Email: Susan.Sisay@bcu.ac.uk

For any support in the event of the study causing inadvertent distress of discomfort, please feel free to contact the faculty of BLSS (Birmingham City University).

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences (BLSS)
Birmingham City University
4 Cardigan Street, Birmingham B4 7BD
Tel: 0121 331 5000 Email: BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Research Study Title:
Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation: A Narrative Inquiry into Black African Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the West Midlands Urban Environment.

Name of Researcher:
Tamaralaiyefa Tiemo, Graduate Researcher, Birmingham City University

Contact Details of Researcher:
Email: Tamaralaiyefa.Tiemo@mail.bcu.ac.uk

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [*insert date*] for the above study. If I have asked for clarification or for more information, I have had satisfactory responses.

I understand that participation is voluntary and such participation could be withdrawn at any time, without giving any reason, according to the modalities stated in the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand that the data transcription from the interview may be looked at by the researcher and his Director of Studies.

I give my permission to audio record the interview.

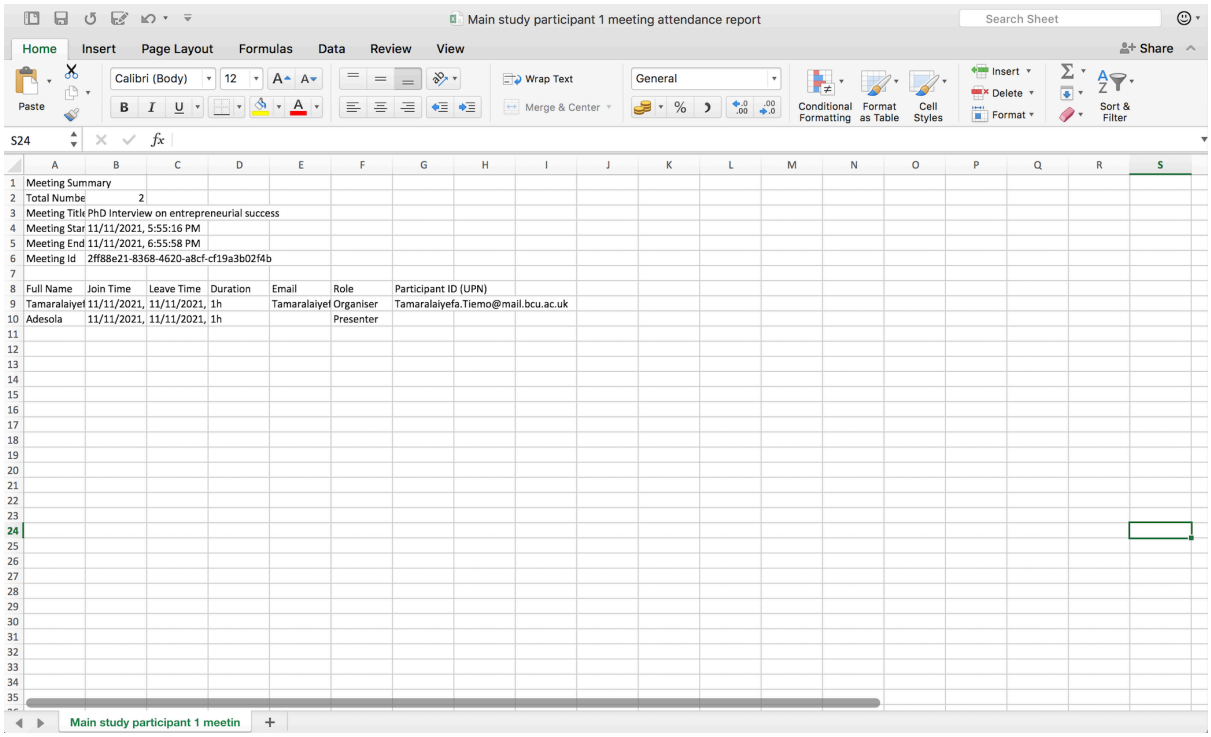
I give my permission to share information gotten from the interview in an anonymized form.

I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

For any concerns or complaint about this research, BLSS Ethics committee can be contacted by email; BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

Appendix D: Sample of Interview Attendance Report (1Hour Block)



Main study participant 1 meeting attendance report

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Meeting Summary						
2	Total Numbe	2					
3	Meeting Title	PhD Interview on entrepreneurial success					
4	Meeting Star	11/11/2021, 5:55:16 PM					
5	Meeting End	11/11/2021, 6:55:58 PM					
6	Meeting Id	2ff88e21-8368-4620-a8cf-cf19a3b02f4b					
7							
8	Full Name	Join Time	Leave Time	Duration	Email	Role	Participant ID (UPN)
9	Tamaralaiyef	11/11/2021,	11/11/2021,	1h	Tamaralaiyef	Organiser	Tamaralaiyefa.Tiemo@mail.bcu.ac.uk
10	Adesola	11/11/2021,	11/11/2021,	1h		Presenter	

Appendix E: Supplementary Data (Follow-Up Interviews)

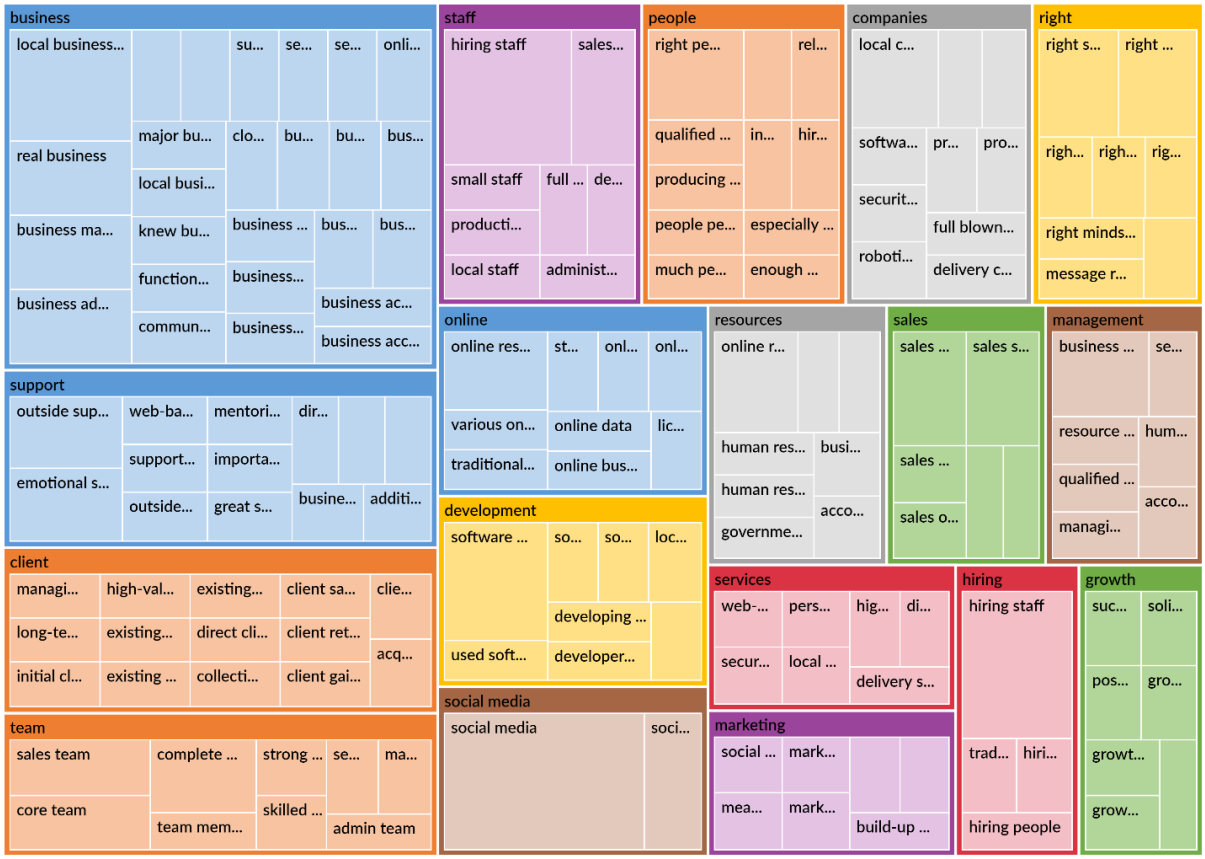
Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What factors had the greatest impact on your access to startup capital and financial resources at startup? After continued growth.
2. Have you noticed social discrimination or biases in the West Midlands? Is it a significant concern?
3. How did such stereotyping and pressures affect your entrepreneurial orientation? Can this change over time?
4. How have government services assisted your business in its growth and development? What other services were needed during this process?
5. What recommendations would you offer to aspiring BAIEs in the UK seeking to startup a new business venture?

Appendix F: Standardised Excel Spreadsheet

Can you please tell me the main reasons (drivers/incentives) for setting up/running your business?	Why have you selected this particular business or industry?	Why did you select entrepreneurship instead of employment at another organisation (e.g. employee or manager)?	Do you consider yourself a successful entrepreneur, and what traits or characteristics do you associate with business	What are the primary factors that have contributed to your success/failure?	What do you consider as opportunities in running your business and how did you recognise or spot them?	What are the benefits of these opportunities to you and your business?	What entrepreneurial resources are available to you?	What do you consider as challenges in running your business?	What are the impacts of these challenges on you and your business?	How do you overcome these challenges?	Who are your primary employees?	How do you attract and retain your employee population?	Where and how did you get your start-up capital?	What kind of support do you need and receive? Who provides this support	How satisfied are you with this support?	What are your anticipated future needs in terms of funding, human resources, or physical resources to ensure long-term growth?
After moving to the UK, I saw an opportunity to open a boutique in my neighbourhood. There were other chain shops, but not anything selling artisan designs and native fashions. I felt like even though it would be a challenge to get setup, it was better for me to be in business for myself than to be working for someone for	In Ghana, I was a clothing designer. I had a small shop and my family worked in the business. We have a lot of experience with fashion and in authentic, African fashion in particular. I wanted to be able to sell some of my own designs, but I needed a broader product base to attract a more diverse clientele. There was a space	That's easy. Why would I want to work to build someone else's dream when I can focus on my own? I have always been driven and a self-starter. I was not coming to the UK to just sit and wait for life to happen. I was coming to be a part of this enterprise and market, to build a future for my kids.	My store has been open for five years now. We are profitable. I have a waiting list for vendors. I think that qualifies as success. I am also in the process of opening another location to accommodate demand. I think that you have to demonstrate a strong will and ability to deal with adversity to be successful. You also cannot be afraid to	For me, I have to say that the motivation of my children has had a powerful influence. I have support from family and relatives, but when I look in their faces, I see kids that deserve more than I had growing up. I want to build their future and I'm not getting any younger. I didn't have a lot of money. I didn't know where	There were two major opportunities. The first was finding the right space. For me, high traffic and customer exposure was essential. Second, there was my relationship with >>>> and the ACH. Her experience and recommendations were key to guiding me along the path of setting up the business and getting my	Basically it was faster. I think that the rate of establishing a new business from idea to opening was sped up a lot. Also, because I was following a plan, I feel like the security of the contracts and agreements were more consistent. I had the confidence to move forward.	There are some local programmes such as the counselling initiative offered at ACH and there is the ScaleUp initiative that they recently launched that offered some great advice when I was looking to expand recently. My bank gave some assistance in invoicing and payments. And there's a lot of stuff online.	The first challenge was trying to attract sellers and get merchandise. I couldn't do it alone and I couldn't buy everything up front. I had to find local artisans or people online willing to take some risk with me and put their products out there for sale. Once we were up and running, then the issues came with invoicing and billing and finances each	I think that there was a period early on where I didn't think I could keep going. I truly thought I was going to lose everything. I had just lost a big vendor because they didn't think we were moving fast enough. Then a competitor opened just a few blocks over. But I kept pushing and I think that these challenges made me even	It's really about inner strength and building up the resolve to address any problems that might arise. Also, there is a need to build community partnerships and relationships to improve your ability to succeed even when things are difficult. I think that was perhaps the hardest part at first. Realizing that I couldn't do	I have five full time staff members now at one location and have just hired four more to open the new location. They are local staff, several are migrants from Ghana also. They're learning the ropes while getting paid at the same time.	I think it was first about word of mouth, getting the need out to the community and seeing who might want a job. Then, I had to figure out how to keep them motivated, so I started letting them work on merchandising and work with new vendors so they felt like they were involved. I think the pay is important too, but it's going to be	I had saved money and my parents gave me their life savings when we left Ghana and came to the UK. Then I was able to use a lot of the materials that I brought with me to get things up and running. I didn't really need additional funds, just the first month's rent and security deposit to get the store open. I have used bank credit to improve	Mostly it is just family and friends. I also rely a lot on the community. They are the backbone for this type of boutique store. It's all pretty informal. The coaching I received at ACH and recently through ScaleUp has been essential too. I am also supported by my bank, I guess.	It has been great. I honestly didn't expect the reception that I got, and I think that support is key to making this type of a dream a reality. It's not easy to start out in a new country on your own. It's even more difficult when you have two children that depend on you.	I've thought about a third location. I've also thought about expanding into fashion design and looking at building my brand in that sector, not just as an artisan shop. I am just continuing to move forward, so yes, we will probably need more funding, more industry knowledge, partnerships, and other opportunities to grow over
I graduated university with a natural passion for self-employment and building my own business. I didn't like what I saw in other companies. Their models were tired and their tech was not exciting. So I decided that I could build my own company from the ground up and get ahead of the game so to speak. I needed an outlet for my ideas, and so my own	I came to the UK to attend university at >>>>>. This was the field that I was passionate about. I didn't just plan on working for a gaming or software development company, I wanted to build my own service-based business model. So I worked on the blueprint at school and was ready to launch upon graduation.	It's a running joke in Uni that you pay for schooling all these years and then pay with blood to watch someone else's product make them rich. I wasn't going to sit around and watch other people use my skills and my tech. This was going to be my baby, my idea.	I think that it wasn't until we hit our first 10,000 users last month that I really saw myself as a success. We were making money, but not the type of money I wanted to keep the business going. At that level, though, I have been able to start working on the second iteration of our application, and I think that it will expand from there. There are skills like	For the most part, it has been my focus and passion about this business. You build something from scratch and then present it to the world and sit back and watch what the users do with it. It's exciting and frightening at the same time. So, my personal motivations have helped me succeed. I am basically on my own anyway.	It was not necessarily a logical or straightforward process to get into the business. We had to find clients. That meant marketing, learning about app promotion through the app store. We also had to build our social media and find our local niche. So, it was basically about finding strategic partners that could help us grow, and then expanding from there. I	They expedited our growth. They helped us to enter the market more successfully and strategically. They allowed us to find a niche and then grow from there.	I have relied heavily on online resources such as social media and government portals to figure out my business plan and entry strategy. Now that we are running, I am using local accountants to help with taxes and payment related considerations.	I am a creator. That means that I am not always interested in the harder aspects related to customer support, selling, accounting, you know. I want to innovate, I want to design, and I want to programme. The business side of running the business is challenging, and I have had to learn a lot and hire people to fill in the gaps.	From the first day, I was behind in terms of business management. It was more of a passion project translated into something tangible, something that could make money. And so I needed a team to support me, to provide the resources where I could not such as in selling or customer service. I even had issues figuring out the hiring process and had to	There are a lot of qualified people out there looking to work for a startup. Especially in the technology industry, people are energized by the thought of new products or services. They see big money and want to participate. So I started by hiring people to take on responsibilities I couldn't commit time to. Then I started talking to some other software	I have a core team now. For each of the major business units in our company such as sales, customer service, product development, there are heads running each department. Then there are staff under them. We started with a few core members, but as we have grown, we had to hire on additional developers, engineers, even a security	It was hard at first. There was almost no money and I had to promise shares of the company to get people on board. But after six months and rising sales, we had a recognisable name and people started coming to us and applying. We kept the job posting up and could eventually offer a competitive package for new hires. We give paid time off, bonuses, profit	I designed the initial application during university, so there wasn't any up front cost. Then I started pushing to market and I needed funds to market and to build the app presence. I borrowed from my father. I also had some money from my grandfather's passing, so I used that to keep afloat until the sales came in.	I have, of course the support of friends and family. I also have a very strong social media connection with the developer community. There are a lot of resources online on public sites like Git Hub and Reddit that provide support to software developers. For local business needs, I rely mainly on my staff and their expertise.	I am extremely satisfied. I feel like we have achieved very solid growth and have a positive long-term outlook on the back of their support.	To continue to expand, we are going to need to build our teams and develop new links between future products and our existing client base. This means more innovation and more investment in development and design. There are also sales opportunities and build-up marketing strategies that we are going to need to implement.
As a boy, I watched my father work the fields near our home. I saw him grow old. He was miserable. When I came to the UK, I committed to something different, to being my own boss. I was not going to work for someone else. It is very hard to follow that path, but I was driven and I had a product that I knew businesses could use, so it made moving forward easier.	This was the field I had always planned on working in. I knew that if I could work with software development and computers, I could make a good life for my family. This is where the money is right now.	As I mentioned, I was not going to follow in my father's footsteps. It would have been easier, maybe, to work for someone else, but they basically are paying for your brain power, and that's something I prefer to keep to myself. I would have been proud to work with a major corporation as a partner, but not as an employee.	I think that success is defined by the ability to craft a stable and sustainable business. I achieved this after 6 months of very hard struggles, and even though we are not large, we are successful. Now I have people who depend upon me and my business for their salaries. That means something. To me and them. Some traits that I bring to the table include my energy, my clear vision, and my ability to multitask.	The first thing you need in a business like this is the IP. You need a product or something to set you apart from the other software companies. It is not enough to just enter the market and try to sell the same things. This is about differentiating your brand and your software through services, upgrades, and functionality. That is where we were different and how we became successful.	One big opportunity was my partnership with a leader in the local software development industry and a natural mentor for me during this process. He was able to give me some direction and support my marketing strategy with recommendations and services. I also took advantage of a gap in the market and filled it with an automated solution that just made sense to businesses. We were the only ones	I think if you can be first, then you can compete more effectively. You also have to be willing to change, agile is what they call it. I see myself as very agile. I am willing to adapt and evolve if needed, and even though that may mean some tough decisions, it basically allows me to continue to improve what I am bringing to the field. I think that the mentoring support helped to put things in perspective and direct	I have used some resources from the University that allowed me to connect with businesses locally and across the UK. Databases, registries, things like that. I also used web-based support services from the local government such as the SYOB site which outlines the how and the what in business creation. It is about combining information with capabilities to meet the expectations of the stage of	I think that the most challenging part is the administrative side of the business. The other parts, the product, the sales, the human resources, those are all straightforward and easy for me. I have to keep up with the paperwork and the administration, and that takes support.	It means that one of the first things I had to consider was how I was going to get everything accomplished. That meant hiring staff and bring on new people to make things happen. It also meant that I had to weigh other areas where I could cut back and automate. So I used software and accounting resources to make things easier.	I think I answered this, but basically it is through finding the resources I needed to achieve my goals. This meant both human and physical resources and then the software that would link everything together. For example, I didn't want to spend a lot of money on office space at first, so I had to find ways of networking digitally and use online networking to connect the team as we grew. That	We are a small staff, but the primary employees are people that I identified through job postings and social media chat rooms with specific skills. In this business, you are not hiring warm bodies, you are hiring qualified individuals who can get the job done.	I used traditional job postings online. Then I also reached out to people on social media when I started growing and recruited directly. I brought on board one relative and some friends too, something that I basically regretted almost immediately. It's about finding the best people and putting them in place.	I used savings and borrowed some money from relatives. I also was able to take out a personal loan at the bank because I had established credit during the time I was at university.	I basically have needed people to take on the administrative roles of the business. I have hired some of them. I have been referred to others. I am constantly evaluating how efficient our systems are and revising our contracts to reduce costs. I only work with qualified individuals.	For the most part, it has been invaluable. If people are not up to speed quickly, then they are out. I do not have any time to play around or wait for them to catch up. In this business, you get it or you don't. Easy.	I think that over the medium term we are fine. To grow long term, however, we are going to need some form of investment such as venture capital or strategic partnership. We are going to have to continue to expand our resources to make the most out of the sales volume that we are continuing to achieve and the cost structure that we have to keep up with.
To be honest, I was tired of working at the bank for just over minimum wages. They call it a living wage, but who really lives on it? I wanted to go out on my own, and in this business, you basically just need clients to get started. So that's what I did. I found several long-term clients that would allow me to	I've always had a head for numbers. And I recognised early on that the people with money are the ones who work in the industry. So finance just made sense.	Like I said, I didn't want to work for a base wage anymore. I wanted to control my earning potential, and the only way to do that was to set up my own office. Now I can recoup returns off of client gains and not worry about my general salary level.	I think that as far as shifting into a self-driven, self-made business, yes. I have been successful. As far as building a large-scale shop or organisation that employs a lot of people, then no. I think success is about waking up every day and being excited for the prospects of the coming hours. I am excited, I am	I have a very good head for numbers, so that helps. I also have a supportive family who was willing to help out when I was initially starting out. I would also say that being in this business, you have a good understanding of how to manage a business, so that has transferred from account management into	I think that being face to face at the bank gave me a foot up at the beginning. I was able to build relationships. I had my certifications already established. Then I could just transition into the same type of asset management but outside of the firm. I also started finding new clients in friends and family	The rate of growth was high. There were less hurdles to overcome. I didn't have to spend all my time looking for clients, I could focus on the work.	For the most part, everything I needed I learned either at University or through the bank. I had the certifications and the licenses, so I didn't have to get anything else. Then I was just using the skills I already had to set up the business.	I think that there are costs that you don't anticipate such as operations, space, transportation, all of that adds up. Also, there are risk factors, such as what happens if my clients have a down year? Then I am on my own for income and maybe liable for some losses as well if I don't protect myself legally.	I have focused a lot of time on credibility and legitimacy. I have been striving to build a business that follows all of the rules exactly, but then also creates opportunities for earnings for me and my clients.	By understanding the legal precedence and following rules and guidelines rigorously all the time.	I only have three other people that work for me and they are in the same role that I am in. So, we are basically all working together now.	I met them through the business, through social networking and connections at various industry events. Then they were interested in leaving their jobs and coming to work as a partner in this outside enterprise.	I had saved since I started working for the bank. I also went on retainer with my clients, so there was up front money. Then, as the quarterly earnings came in, I had residual incomes that I could rely on, so I didn't need outside startup capital.	I have had strong support from my family members. I have also relied heavily on my clients and their continued trust in my services.	Very satisfied.	I don't anticipate significant funding needs. As we expand, I will likely hire more administrative staff, but with our core team, I think that we can continue to manage significant capital and grow over time.
I had started out working for a small firm, but quickly realised that in order to grow in the industry, I was going to need to open my own business. In this industry, investment advice and financial planning is not really something you team up on unless you are joining a large corporation, and that was never something I wanted to be a part of.	I suppose watching my parents struggle through their retirement years was motivation enough. But I also had some inspiration from teachers at school and then at university. I was fixated on numbers and the stock market.	If you throw a dart in this town, you are going to hit a financial planner or investment banker or accountant. I figured that I could start something really innovative and build off of sustainable investments. So I started talking to my existing clients about an investment programme that would guide them towards only sustainable companies. They were excited. I got excited. It's the old do well by doing good adage. My first three clients were up in profits, and word of mouth expands from there.	I didn't recreate the wheel or anything. When you think about it, I'm not doing anything that innovative. But I am responsible for a business that pays employees, manages clients, and returns profits. So, based on those qualities, I do consider myself successful. I am driven, focused, energised, motivated, passionate. These are all traits that make me a success. I think that people can have other traits like intelligence or business acumen, but you have to have the whole package to truly succeed.	For me, it was an understanding of the industry that I am in and the skills and resources to continue to offer high-value services to my clients.	When I learned about stakeholder theory in college, it was basically just a concept, but when I started to see it put into action in the business world, then I saw a big opportunity for investment targeting. I did some research, evaluated some other companies that were doing the same thing, and came up with a plan that would meet my goals. I was put into a difficult position where I could keep collecting clients without any real earning potential, or I could branch out and put my skills to work in my	I think that as long as you can recognise that something is an opportunity and put it into action, you are going to be able to grow and prosper. If you are just waiting for something to happen, life is challenging and things don't move at the speed that we want them to. The opportunity may just be more knowledge. It may also be a hand up, which I had in the form of a couple of strong mentors.	I relied pretty heavily on my previous firm to get established, to earn income and to build up my status in the community. Then I started to utilise outside partners such as an accountant and social marketing consultant to expand my presence locally. I used government websites and online business guidance as well to build my business portfolio and protect against tax issues.	There are several. First, how do you attract clients? Especially people that want to give you their money? It's hard if you don't have a strong reputation and legitimate storefront in the community. So that was the first thing. Then there is the issue of operating income. How do you keep your life and business afloat during the early stages? How can you build and grow if you are needing to take an income to be stable financially?	There was a slow start effect that delayed the progress from idea to fully functioning business. There was also the growth impact which meant that my scope of client acquisition was negatively impacted by the rate of development. At the same time, there was a more personal service level that I could provide to a smaller customer base. When I went to expand, there were challenges with finding the right people and installing them in the right positions.	Persistence, really. It's basically about sticking to a plan and continuing to press forward even when things are difficult. This means also finding new areas of income if possible such as business plan consulting or site analysis.	I have a series of administrative employees that are responsible for day to day workings. They handle phones, network security, investment analysis, market assessments, things like that. I manage direct customer support and investment timing and reporting. I also have a sales team that is growing.	In two ways, really. I use online job postings to seek out people who are interested in growing with a small business. I also will target people that I know are effective performers such as employees at competitors or people that I hear about through social media connections. Networking is everything in this business.	Through my first employment right after uni, I saved money. I used that to provide a buffer for bill payment and other responsibilities while I waited for this to take off. Then I was able to rely on client retainers and commissions. It's a big shell game at first, shift funds here and then there, and then you are rolling.	I self-started, so I self-supported. There weren't any people to aid me in this process. I didn't have family or friends that could help.	It would have been easier with additional support. I could have used additional funding at first. But now I don't have any loans or commitments to pay off, so that is beneficial.	I plan on expanding my sales team in the future. I would like to add one or two more qualified financial advisors, but we will need the staff to justify the move. I will continue to keep costs down to reduce out of pocket expenses.
It's pretty much a natural progression for this career path. You start out somewhere small or you work your way to a standstill in the corporate world like I did. Then you figure out that there are opportunities for growth beyond the traditional grind. So, you get motivated to look outside of this path you are grinding out. I needed to increase my income level. I need to grow somewhere where I felt like I was improving myself. It's a strange and difficult path.	This is what my guidance counsellor recommended that I focus on in secondary school. It's basically a lifelong dream that I have pursued.	There is a saying like if you don't like the way it's done, then do it yourself. That's pretty much every day in this industry. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out where I fit. What is a career path really about if it isn't self-actualisation and growth? I was scared at first. I can admit that now. I wanted to have satisfied clients. I wanted people to trust me. So I just had to take a risk and walk this path.	Absolutely, I have been successful. I mean, the real test is whether you have any staying power in this industry, and I have lasted this long. We don't intend to stop anytime soon, so I would say that our growth forecast is positive. Success involves doing something well that makes you happy. That's it. If you leave at the end of the day and are proud of what you put into the work, then you are successful.	In this business, it is all about who you know, and if you don't know enough people, then who you can network with to expand your base. For me, that meant targeting high-value clients, building network lists, and developing strong relationships with people that could help us achieve our goals.	Anytime you can connect deeply with someone on a professional level, you have an opportunity for business development. Also, I had some early phase opportunities from my employer such as training, certification, and licenses. That's intellectual property, I suppose, and it's really critical for any startup.	I would say stability is key. Then there was also the growth benefit that they afforded. I mean, when you start off with clients and certifications, you are basically ready to enter the industry. There are other benefits such as confidence and the motivational pressure of potential failure. These really push you forward fast.	I have not relied on many outside resources with the exception of websites and search forums related to licensing and business accreditation. That's the primary goal, to be legit as quickly as possible.	There are some big hurdles in this industry such as a lack of brand recognition or the issue of trust between clients and our services. You have to ask people for things early in the relationship, and they are not always very forthcoming.	They create additional hurdles when trying to negotiate contracts or develop plans for the future. Everyone is a bit on the edge and they are waiting to see how things go before they commit wholly to the long term.	We have increased our transparency. We have focused on direct client services. We have prioritised communication and open door policies. We are active with our clients and build relationships that are critical to the realisation of their goals over the long term and ours as well.	We have a team that handles a variety of skill-related positions including sales, service, administration, and advising. We also have a marketing team that we retain. These are people that I have identified or hired to fulfil essential positions	Using the traditional sites such as CareerBuilder or Monster and also through posts on social media or Linked In. These are professionals in their field, so I have to focus on getting the message right for our business. The size of our company can be an issue, but as long as they see positive growth and guaranteed salaries, that's what counts.	It was savings basically. I also borrowed from my parents in the early phases, but once clients were signed up, then we were able to move forward without assistance.	I have only basic outside support now. There is emotional support, but nothing financial.	It is valuable in terms of keeping me grounded and focused on things beyond the workplace.	I plan on expanding more as we acquire more clients, so I will have to build teams that are able to navigate changes in the industry. I mean, how are we going to address bitcoin and other new currencies? There's a lot to weigh. So new knowledge, skills, and training is essential.
This was a passion project at first, something to keep me busy while my husband was away on business. But soon, I realised that I had a real business growing and my demand started to grow beyond my small home kitchen. I had to expand to remain in business, so that meant finding a commercial space, hiring staff, and developing new clients. It was a whirlwind, but it worked.	To be honest, I didn't really like cooking or the kitchen in general until I discovered baking. Now, I am challenging myself every week to come up with new ideas, new recipes. It's exciting, and it keeps me moving forward. I think that it wasn't so much a choice or selection, but more a transition from hobbyist to professional.	I didn't actually plan on starting a business. This was pretty much dropped in my lap. I was happy to see how much people loved what we were doing, so it was just a normal transition from there.	I guess you could say I am successful. We have orders coming in each week. I'm paying salaries. And we're profitable. So that basically means success, right?	Demand in the first place. Then, I think it was really the product and how people responded to it. Once we figured out how to package things and ship, we expanded even more, and the internet and social media helped us grow.	I think that first, there was that initial client, that one business that I couldn't have done this without. Then, of course, there is my husband who has encouraged what I am doing. And there was the right space at the right time when we needed to move quickly into the commercial sector.	They have made our business move smoother. We have transitioned from home-based to commercial enterprise relatively seamlessly.	I actually got my degree in business administration, so I have been able to rely a lot on those lessons in the business. I am also constantly using online data and government resources to help with the paperwork side of things.	This went from a passion project to a full blown company in less than two months. It was challenging. I lost my time at home. I lost track of the other things I was going to do with my life. It really is all-consuming. So demand, time, pressure, all of these are challenges.	They make this more like work and less like a fun project some days, so things are harder. It's not really just me in the kitchen playing with pastries; it's a lot of quality control and resource management.	I keep a level head. I have hired the right people and brought in some qualified managers to make sure that the day to day is fluid and consistent. I have also done some stress relief and taken some time for myself.	I have a very strong team of all women. They are also from Nigeria and they keep each other in check. We are like a sisterhood and we work together very well.	It is really just a community business. That is how we keep going. If someone were to leave, I wouldn't look far.	I was not doing this for money in the first place, but when I had to scale up, my husband and I agreed that I could appropriate some of the savings to grow quickly. I needed those funds for the equipment and raw materials, but soon, the orders replaced what was spent.	There is always great support from home. There's a lot of community support too. Kids know me and are always looking for a sweet treat. I work with my friends, and that keeps things light and fun.	Very satisfied. Happy with how things are going.	We are going to keep seeing what happens, what we might need in the future. Are we going to be able to grow further? Who knows. If we do decide to expand, then we will invest in another building or more equipment or a night shift. It's up in the air and flexible.
When I graduated culinary school, my first stop was the restaurant industry. I realised that a lot of local companies wanted a nutritious, on-demand food source, but your average restaurant is not set up for daily catering. So, I started doing some research and figured out that I could not only make a serious income off of catering alone, but I could grow a real business on local businesses alone. It was a natural transition after that.	I have always had a passion for food. My grandmother was an amazing cook, she taught my mother, my mother taught me. My father also cooked, but more traditional foods. So, it was pretty much in my blood from birth. Then when I came here, I found a scholarship programme for chefs and it was like fate took over.	When you see a need, it's easier to fill that need than to try to manipulate the system to make it solve the problem. No one said that running a business like this was going to be easy, but if you have the demand, then things just flow. So, rather than spending my life trying to work my way up to head chef without any real chance for ownership, I just decided that this was the best path for me.	Our company grew from one client to over twenty in the past four years. I have expanded from just myself in the kitchen to a full prep, production, and delivery staff. I have a full-sized commercial kitchen and am looking at expanding into another space in the future. So, yes, I would consider myself successful. I have provided people a place to work that is stable with a stable income. I have earned more money than I ever thought possible. It's all about growth	I think that my ability to recognise an opportunity and act on it in the moment was the primary contribution. If I had waited, I don't know what would have happened. Probably someone else would have filled the space, but I got there first. I also think that there is an ability to see the big picture that affects your potential for achievement and success. Can you see beyond the day to day? Can you follow your dreams. That's success	For us, the primary opportunity was the client. I had already developed relationships with several of these local businesses, but once we signed contracts for daily food deliveries, then we were able to branch out to other local companies. I also had relationships with other key partners such as produce companies, meat vendors, and even some talented chefs from culinary school. I acquired all this as I grew in my position, but it was only recognised in the	They provided us with a path from conception to successful growth. They fulfilled an array of needs both in the moment and over time. They ensured we were going to keep building new contacts in the industry even while we were struggling to accommodate existing client needs.	I basically started everything from scratch, so I had to identify a facility, find equipment, build supply relationships, and expand. I started small, but I had taken business management at culinary school, so I knew what steps to take. I used the business support resources at my school to assist in setting up the LLC, to find insurance, to develop an accounting model. Then I went to outside partners like delivery companies for assistance	I think that in the beginning you are very alone. You feel like you are the only thing holding yourself up, and you struggle to build that identity as you fight into the industry. Once you are rolling, there are a new set of challenges such as client satisfaction, human resource management, and supplier negotiation. This takes time away from all the things that you were passionate about to begin with. It can be frustrating.	They are a burden on your daily work. They restrict your ability to build outside relationships because you are working all the time. It's all relative, but what I feel is that when you are being confronted with the ups and downs of the business, when you are on your own, you feel the pressure more. There are no buffers, no outside support for the most part. I mean, no one really understands what it is that you are going through.	First, it's all about focusing. You need to focus on delivering 100% 100% of the time. Then I think it's being realistic with the things you can accomplish and the things you are going to need help on. When I began to get too overwhelmed, I hired staff or I changed my working habits to meet the needs of the clients. It means long nights and early mornings, but that's the business we are in.	I hired staff for various positions throughout the company. For example, I was using a delivery service, but then I realised that with a dedicated vehicle we could cut costs and do the deliveries on our own. Now we have three vehicles, three drivers, and one driver supervisor. I also have sales staff to take orders and to connect with local businesses. Then I have an accountant and a marketing director. Besides that, we have the meat of the catering sandwich, per	At first it was challenging, but as we have grown, our reputation has encouraged people to seek out our business. This is not just a function of how we are going to meet our delivery goals now, it is about expanding beyond our limitations and reaching new levels of service and performance. So, we have a strong culture, we have profit sharing, we have competitive wages. It's all programmed and professional.	I didn't need startup capital at first. I had to buy the first products to meet a week's worth of orders for one client. But once that was done, I was able to turn those profits into funding for the next week, and then it just grew from there. I was living off of my savings for about a month, and then I could afford to pay a small salary.	Family and friends, I guess. Emotional support is pretty important. My mom is my biggest supporter, and we talk on the phone at least once a week. Beyond that, I guess the most important support is from my staff and the professionalism of my crew.	Very, everything has been very positive and had a motivating effect on my ability to grow this business.	We are looking at a second facility. I'm still not sold on it, but if we could get closer to some of our larger clients, it would cut down on logistical issues and improve our delivery efficiency. That would mean more staff, more funding, more contracts for ingredients.
It was either keep trying to become a singer/songwriter or start producing people that I already knew were going to be successful. I had a lot of friends that wanted to record and if we had a space to work out of, I figured that we could get stuff out into the field.	I have always loved the music industry. I am passionate about the quality of songs being produced, and I enjoy participating in improving the innovativeness of the industry.	It was never really a question. I was going to be on my own one way or another. I wasn't cut out for the simple office job or just sitting in a cubicle. I am a people person, and wanted to be positioned with people that would help me be successful.	I have been blessed in my achievements. Our production company has grown in the past two years and we are now managing clients across multiple labels. We have rights, we have exclusive beats. I would say that success comes from within. From your willingness to invest time in the difficult steps to	I didn't grow up with anything. We were so incredibly poor. I wanted to be able to send money home to my parents. I wanted to change the cycle of my ancestry and really push towards long term financial success. So, I took risks, I came to the UK, I hit the pavement and started pressing.	My biggest opportunities were relationships. I met with two artists that I knew were going to be huge, but I had to get them to trust me. So that meant that I had to build relationships that were meaningful and that would withstand the pressures of this industry. When I had the opportunity to rent out space at a cheap rate, I	They are the reason that we have grown the way we are now. We needed momentum and it was like a snowball effect. From one to the next. Once they get your name in their mouth, the whole business opens up. It's like a key.	I mean, not many. I'm self-made, so I guess it's basically those things that I had to rent or buy to get us going.	Keeping reliable people. Continuing to build new relationships. Finding new talent. These are all challenges.	They have determined the flow of our business, up or down. They also affect our direction of growth and the strategies that we employ for the future.	I mean, it's a day to day grind. We are pushing for new talent, seeking out artists. We are building relationships with people and striving to grow partnerships. We are also encouraging our existing artists to release new music, to promote, to get out in the field with the listeners.	I have a complete team now. I have sound engineers, an admin team, talent scouts, and sales staff. I have team members positioned in every sector of the business.	I am always out searching for new talent. I gave a guy at a bar my business card because he could sell ice to a Siberian husky in Russia. It's about connecting with people and figuring out how their skills are going to help your business perform.	I didn't have anything really, I had to take everything in my bank and put it into my first sessions. Then I had to promote and sell those tracks until they hit. Then with residuals, I could keep funding the business. I borrowed some money from a loan shark. That cost me. Besides that, I was working outside the traditional	No one except the team around me. I am alone here. I have family back in Nigeria, but they can't really help out with anything here. They are my cheerleaders, I guess.	I'm okay. I can always use more people on my team, but it's a process.	We are going to be looking at taking on some investors to set up a larger studio. We are already booking about a month out, and it is going to take some time before we can expand, but I would like to see our artist pool expanding faster.
I wanted to do something cutting edge. There were not a lot of high-tech firms around here, and really not any robotics companies. I realised the direction that things were heading and figured out a way to monetise it.	I have been building with technology since I was a kid and took apart my first lawn mower. It's about manipulating machines to make them do what we want, when we want. I love that idea and have always wanted to know how to do it for myself.	The industry here was slow moving and dull. I wanted to get out ahead of things and I had some money saved from working through college, so I could start small and expand. I got my first contract locally with a security services company and was able to go full time on my own.	I think that what I've built is successful. I'm not Google or Apple, but I am developing robots and AI that are changing the way we interact with machines. We make proprietary products and we contract out, so it's a well-rounded business. That's kind of the key to success, adapting where needed and letting the rest work for you.	Timing. Definitely timing. I didn't even truly understand how perfect my timing was until about two years into the first project. If we'd come along a year earlier or later, we'd have missed out on the contract. Also, finding a strategic partner right away to support our first build was critical. They supported our seed funds and allowed us to operate autonomously for the first six months.	For our business, it is about finding intelligent people who are passionate about future technologies. That takes time and effective searches. So when you get someone on board with the skills and right mindset, they become an opportunity. You are building the tech. It is not handed to you, so you have to recognise when someone is going to make a difference and bring them	This has helped us to become a leader in our field. Our designs are advanced, our solutions are competitive, our robots are innovative. That's the result of our team and a commitment to quality designs.	I have used various online databases and some government portals to assess business startup tax considerations and consequences. Then, when I brought staff on board, I had to outsource the HRM side of things to a local service provider to make sure that I wasn't missing anything.	It's always about keeping momentum going on a project. You have to keep moving forward to keep funding coming into the business, so if you are not innovating, not driving growth, then you run the risk of falling behind. Funding is our biggest challenge and it is constantly pressuring us to expand and find new projects.	We seem to work from behind. It makes things difficult. We also can't do all of the projects we would like to. If something's not working, we have to cut it and move on to something else.	We use an iterative design process. We adapt our schedule. We bring in consultants for parts of our projects or post questions online to address issues that might arise. We are adaptive.	I have hired a complete team of engineers, designers, and fabricators. We are not just building hobby robots now, we are designing large-scale commercial robots for very complex projects like automotive manufacturing. So we have skilled team members in each sector.	Traditional hiring platforms, social media. Sometimes they find us. We also hire friends and family members if they have the right skill sets.	Our first capital infusion came from our first client. Basically it was a pay for design solution that allowed us to get moving. After that, we were basically flowing from project to project, cannibalising the funds until we were profitable. Then salaries could be paid.	We are a team and within that team, we are supporting each other. We all have people at home who support us. I have my wife, my daughter. Everyone has some outside support structure that keeps them moving.	It is amazing. The people in my life have been so supportive and so committed to our goals. It's a powerful feeling to have people believe in you so openly and honestly.	We are going to be taking on investors in the future as we expand. My goal is to go public in 3 years, and at this rate, it will be a reality. It is going to take additional investment and scaling to achieve, but it is going to happen.

Appendix G: Hierarchy Chart by Codes



Appendix H: Modifications to Interview Guide (Semi-Structured Interviews)

Interview Questions Before Modification	Interview Questions After Modification
Demographic information • Where do you come from, when, and why? • What is your age range? [20–29]; [30–39]; [40–49]; [50–59]; [60–69] • What is your educational level? Do you have any professional qualifications or skills? • Do you have any previous work experience? How long did you work? • Is your previous work experience relevant to your current business? **Business information** • What is the legal status of your business? • What is the type of activity of your business? • How long have you been running your business? • How many staff members does your business employ? Are the staffs full time, part time, or casual? • Where is your business located? Have you always been at this location since you started your business? • What is the annual turnover of your business? [£0–£50,000]; [£50,001–£100,000]; [£100,001–£200,000]; [£200,001–£500,000]; [£500,001–£1,000,000]; [> £1,000,000]	**Demographic Information** • Please tell me about your background: Who are you? (Identity, race, citizen…) Where did you come from? When? Why? • What is your age range? [20 – 29]; [30 – 39]; [40 – 49]; [50 – 59]; [60 – 69] • What is your educational level? None; High school; University diploma; Bachelor degree; Master degree; PhD degree; Other (Please specify) • What is your previous work experience (if you have any at all)? How long did you work? Was your previous work experience relevant to your current business? • Did or does any of your parents own a business? • What is the educational level of your father? None; High school; University diploma; Bachelor degree; Master degree; PhD degree; Other (Please specify) • What is the educational level of your mother? None; High school; University diploma; Bachelor degree; Master degree; PhD degree; Other (Please specify) **Business Information** • What is the legal status of your business?

Main questions

- Can you please tell me the main reasons (drivers/incentives) for setting up/running your business?
- Who are your main customers and why?
- Where and how did you get your start-up capital?
- Considering your experiences to date, what do you consider as opportunities in running your business?
- What are the benefits of these opportunities to you and your business?
- Considering your experiences to date, what do you consider as the main challenges or barriers in running your business?
- What are the effects of these challenges on you and your business?
- What kind of business support do you need?
- Who gives you this business support?
- What do you consider as business success?
- Do you consider yourself a successful entrepreneur?
- What do you consider as the contributory factors to your success?

Is it a Limited liability company (LTD); Partnership; Sole proprietorship?

- How would you describe your business? Is it Family owned; Partly family owned; Privately owned?
- What is the type of activity of your business?
- How long has your business been running?
- How many staffs does your business employ? Are the staffs full time; part time; casual?
- Where is your business located?
- What is the annual turnover of your business? [£0 – £125,000]; [£125,001 – £250,000]; [£250,001 – £500,000]; [£500,001 – £1,000,000]; [> £1,000,000]

Business Development and Motivation

- Can you please tell me the main reasons (drivers/incentives) for setting up/running your business?
- Why have you selected this business or industry?
- Why did you select entrepreneurship instead of employment at another organisation (e.g. employee or manager)?
- Do you consider yourself a successful entrepreneur, and what traits or characteristics do you associate with business success?
- What are the primary factors that have contributed to your success/failure?

Opportunities

- What do you consider as opportunities in running your business and how did you recognise or spot them?
- What are the benefits of these opportunities to you and your business?
- What entrepreneurial resources are available to you?

Challenges

- What do you consider as challenges in running your business?
- What are the impacts of these challenges on you and your business?
- How do you overcome these challenges?

Employee Recruiting and Retention

- Who are your primary employees?
- How do you attract and retain your employee population?

Start-up Capital

- Where and how did you get your start-up capital?
- What kind of support do you need and receive? Who provides this support?
- How satisfied are you with this support?

Future Goals

- What are your anticipated future needs in terms of funding, human

	resources, or physical resources to ensure long-term growth?