
Effects of Business *Jihad* on Entrepreneurs' Motivation and Performance

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Abstract: Despite being misinterpreted in many different ways, the concept of *Jihad* can be adopted to convey positive virtues in various aspects of life. While many studies have been generated on the topic of *Jihad* after the September 11th attack, little information is available in the area of business *Jihad*. The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of business *Jihad* on entrepreneurs'

motivation and performance. Nine experienced and successful Muslim entrepreneurs were selected to participate in this study which was conducted by using in-depth interviews. The results revealed that the adherence to the philosophy of business *Jihad* has significant positive impact on the entrepreneurs' motivation and performance. Therefore, these findings have the capacity to inspire the leaders from various government agencies and entrepreneurs to work together in instilling the spirit of business *Jihad* as a means to achieve high motivation and performance in the business world.

Keywords: Business *Jihad*, Motivation, Performance, Entrepreneurship

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1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become a global issue since it is considered as a key strategic policy in both developed and developing nations (Kazemi and Madandar, 2012). The primary concern among policy makers and scholars

is how to stimulate the volume and intensity of entrepreneurial activities (Turker and Selcuk, 2009). Dana (2001) highlighted that the governments in many Asian countries are concerned about the development of entrepreneurship; in this regard, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship Development in Malaysia launched several curriculums for developing entrepreneurial training programmes. As these are initial steps in that direction, it is compelling to investigate the motive behind choosing entrepreneurship as a career and the impact of such motives on entrepreneurial outcomes. Although studies on the factors which predict and sustain entrepreneurship have been conducted from various perspectives, the quest remains insatiable due to inconclusive results (Dana, 1997; Valliere, 2008).

Consequently, there has been a recent call for a departure from the traditional motivational factors for predicting entrepreneurship to a lesser-explored and potentially rewarding avenue of further research. In line with this contention, scholars have called for a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial mind set by exploring the deeper belief structures that drive entrepreneurs (King Kauanui, Thomas and Waters, 2005). In other words, there is a need for examinations on the religious dimensions of entrepreneurship.

Religion has long been considered as an important dimension of human nature because of its significant impact on people's lives. For instance, religious beliefs and values are perceived to have a substantial influence on human beings in the way they live, behave and work (Clarke, 2013; Osman-Gani, Hashim and Ismail, 2012). In addition, religious commitment plays an important role in people's lives, through shaping their beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes (Rehman and Shabbir, 2010; Ramadani et al., 2015). In strengthening this position, Dodd and Seaman (1998), argued that individual religion has a positive effect on the believers' entrepreneurial activities in three respects: influencing the decision to become an entrepreneur, enterprise management, and entrepreneur's contact networks. Although Islamic religion and its associated terms in spirituality and religiosity are found to have positive effects on entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour, yet little has been investigated in the current literature with regard to this aspect, including certain important concepts such as business *Jihad*. Based on what it stands for, business *Jihad* is likely to provide another lesser-explored and potentially rewarding avenue of further research on entrepreneurial motivation and performance.

Drawing from the above discussion, the current study attempts to explore the opinions and experiences of Muslim entrepreneurs on the

correct meaning of *Jihad* and demonstrate how it has been integrated into the business world particularly on motivation and business performance.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Jihad

The Arabic word *Jihad* means struggling or striving, but it is not synonymous with 'holy war' (*Al-Harb*) and 'fighting' (*Qitaal*). In common usage of language, it specifically means striving to perform a task or meeting a challenging goal or responsibility (Ali, Gibbs and Camp, 2003). To put it differently, from an Islamic perspective, *Jihad* conveys self-control and hard work; striving for continuous improvement and acquisition of knowledge. Thus, as noted by Seriki (2005), one who exerts himself physically and mentally or spends his wealth in the way of Allah is indeed engaged in *Jihad*. However, the greatest *Jihad* as explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a man's determination to allow Allah's desires to override his own. In other words, a total submission to the will of Allah by fashioning our lives according to divine principles as proclaimed in the Qur'an and Prophetic tradition (*Hadis*). To relate *Jihad* to business, the concept stands for sincerity, hard work, and purposeful involvement in work and organization (Ali, Gibbs and Camp, 2003). As succinctly captured by Hisham (Azimi and Yaacob, 2012) the definition of *Jihad* in business should be viewed within the concept of *Jihad alAkbar* which demands Muslim entrepreneurs to strive for excellence by putting aside their self-interests, and to gather strength and the abilities to face any challenge and obstacles until the business is successful. In addition, they have to search and learn more about business knowledge and techniques in order to be more successful. Drawing from the above, business *Jihad* conveys the meaning that entrepreneurs adopt productive and creative endeavors that benefit themselves and society. Thus, *Jihad* in both spirit and practice is also part of the economic struggle as it focuses on improvement and growth at the individual, organisational, and societal levels (Ali, Gibbs and Camp, 2003). The concept of giving one's best in seeking permissible sustenance is a duty demanded in Islam (Azimi and Yaacob, 2012). This is because involvement in business is usually considered as an act of worship or devotion to Allah or called as *Ibadah*. As such, businessmen must perform their best and strive to be successful in order to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty.

2.2 Entrepreneurs' Motivation

Motivation, according to McShane and Glinow (2010) refers to a force within a person that affects the direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary behaviour. It is the basic drive for all our actions and directs our behaviours. Motivation may be diverse, multiple and dynamic because different people engage in the same behaviour for different reasons. The same thing applies to entrepreneurship; an individual's intention to embark an entrepreneurial venture is affected by his perception of the motives surrounding the action. In addition, those who pursue entrepreneurial opportunities, who assemble resources and how people undertake the entrepreneurial process, are influenced by variations in human motivation (Shane, Locke and Collins 2003). It is the concern of scholars and policy makers to unveil the motive behind embarking on entrepreneurship as a career. Kayed and Hassan (2010) provided two reasons for such interest: first, the status and direction of a country's entrepreneurship can be explained by studying the personal motives of entrepreneurs for starting a business. Secondly, is the belief that the performance and conduct of entrepreneurs depend, to some extent, on their motives for starting a new business venture. In supporting this line of reasoning, the European Multi Stakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility (2004), also opined that people venture into entrepreneurship for different reasons and these reasons in turn shape the motivation, strategies and ethical behaviour of the entrepreneur. Again, research has shown that performance, as well as the growth of business, is influenced by individual motivations and owner or founder goals (Hisrich and Brush, 1987; Lerner, Rush and Hisrich, 1997; Shane, Kolvereld and Westhead, 1991). Based on these reasons, it is expected that there is a significant relationship between the motivation for venturing into entrepreneurship in which in this context is business *Jihad* and entrepreneur's performance.

2.3 Business Jihad as antecedent of entrepreneurs' motivation

From the Islamic point of view, human activities including entrepreneurship are governed by inner intentions, drives, and motives (Nawawi, 2003). In strengthening this position, Badias cited by Suhaimi and Yusof (2011) argued that actions or *Amal* are derived from the intention, which is located in the heart of human beings. Accordingly, the person with a pure intention of conducting business *Jihad* is motivated to undertake entrepreneurship and be dutiful, hardworking and devoted without external control with the ultimate aim of seeking the pleasure of Allah rather than other ulterior motives such as seeking for wealth, fame, and name (Ahmad, 2011). The

author further adds that the person without *Ikhlas* may be money minded, selfish and self-centred. In line with the above opinions, the motivation of Muslim entrepreneurs for engaging in business as an act of *Jihad* is to support their households, serve mankind and assist in upholding the religion (Ibrahim, 1990). This is based on the realisation that every action which is not intended at gaining the pleasure of Allah Almighty will bear no benefit in this world and the hereafter (Ibrahim, 1990). Furthermore, Nik (2003) affirms that entrepreneurship is an invaluable and indispensable service to mankind, hence what is considered more important than profit is honest and sincere service to customers and society in general. Consequently, for a Muslim entrepreneur, business is a licence to serve the society in order to gain Allah's reward (Nik, 2003). In other words, gaining divine pleasure is the central goal of Muslim entrepreneurs who integrate the philosophy of *Jihad* in their business pursuits. A quantitative study undertaken by Ismail, Zain and Ahmed (2006) in the eastern region of Peninsular Malaysia supported the argument above. The outcome of the study revealed that the main motivational factors behind Malay Muslim entrepreneurship were what the authors termed as "spiritual liability". People are in business because of the desire to develop self, family and community, as well as to 'Islamise' the entrepreneurship process. In other words, they consider being in business as a part of religious duties or *Fardhu Kifayah*. In line with this perspective, Fadli (2011) suggested that the main reason why most missionaries in Medan region of Malaysia engage in business is to generate personal income in order to support and fulfill their personal and families' needs, while the rest of the income are for reserves, doing religious activities and helping the less fortunate such as the needy and orphans. This is consistent with the Qur'anic injunction where Allah proclaims about the responsibility to support one's family and help others who are in dire need such as orphans and the less fortunate ones:

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the nearby neighbor, the distant neighbor, the close companion, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful"(An-Nisa': 36).

The above decree makes it clear that an entrepreneur is responsible for supporting his or her family and the less fortunate in terms of food, clothing, and shelter (Azmi and Yaacob, 2012).

With regard to the '*Islamisation*' of the entrepreneurship process, Azmi and Yaacob (2012) noted that Islam is not a religion which only focuses on

prayers and other forms of worship, but it also has a holistic philosophical framework which covers every aspect of human life. As such, it encourages its followers to integrate and practice this philosophy in their lives. The author further adds that Muslim entrepreneurs are key assets in helping to spread the Islamic-based framework of entrepreneurship in accordance with the principles of *Sharia*. Consequently, it becomes an act of *Jihad* for Muslim entrepreneurs to act in accordance with the Islamic principles so as to be a role model and be emulated by others. In support of this assertion, research carried out by Fadli (2011) suggested that the more Muslim missionaries get involved in entrepreneurship, the higher the level of awareness of society regarding the importance of integrating Islamic principles in their lives. Furthermore, Fadli (2011) discovered that most Muslim missionaries who were involved in businesses in Medan not only served as role models but were also successful in expanding the Muslims' economy. Their success can be associated with the nature of their business activities based on the *Sharia principles* which prohibit sinful acts such as usury, bribe, and speculative economic scenes. Thus, it becomes a challenge for Muslim entrepreneurs to become knowledgeable in both western and Islamic economic systems to be able to convince others about the beauty of the Islamic-based system (Azmi and Yaacob, 2012; Dana, 1997).

Similarly, Vargas-Hernández, Noruzi and Sariolghalam (2010) maintained that to indulge in business is to perform an obligatory duty and those profits, though important, are merely incidental in the fulfilment of the *Fardhu Kifayah*. Thus, Muslim entrepreneurs driven by the desire to wage *Jihad* conduct business not solely for profit, but above all, to fulfil the *Fardhu Kifayah*. What is more important above all other considerations to such Muslim entrepreneurs is the search for Allah's blessings. The researchers noted that although entrepreneurs have to have objectives and targets, these are subservient to the ultimate objective of acquiring the blessing of Allah Almighty. Furthermore, a qualitative research conducted by Fontaine (2011) to investigate the behaviour of Muslim entrepreneurs in Malaysia who uphold their religious values in business practice validated the claim. Findings suggested that the respondents were in business to wage what they termed business *Jihad* to make money and to spend it for the benefit of charity and the course of Allah Almighty.

2.4 Business Jihad as an antecedent of entrepreneurs' performance

Business *Jihad* can positively affect entrepreneurial performance directly in three respects: its emphasis on striving for the best, knowledge acquisition and sharing, and building strong business networks. One of the ways that

Jihad can improve business performance is through its belief in striving for continuous acquisition of knowledge. The possession of the required skills and technology are highly regarded in Islam such that it is considered an obligation *Fardhu Kifayah* (Abeng, 1997; Azimi and Yaacob, 2012). Thus, it is also an act of business *Jihad* for an entrepreneur to acquire relevant knowledge and experience for the successful management of the business and to share that knowledge with others (Azmi and Yaacob, 2012). The importance of continuous learning for the success of any entrepreneurship venture need not be over emphasised. As such, it is expected that entrepreneurs who integrate *Jihad* in their pursuit will give due consideration to acquiring the requisite knowledge in order to achieve their utmost best. However, the cultural norms, religious values and behavioural codes that mostly affect the nature of female entrepreneurship, in the case the performance of female entrepreneurs, may be influenced by social system and customer knowledge (Ratten, 2016; Anggadwita and Dhewanto, 2016). Indeed, religion has a strong influence and motivation on entrepreneurship in terms of duty and responsibility towards family, society and nation (Ramadani, Dana, Ratten and Tahiri, 2015). According to Ratten (2016), the motivation to financially support their families and the flexibility that an entrepreneurship venture offers improves the performance of female entrepreneurship in the informal economic sectors. In addition, Anggadwita and Dhewanto (2016) argued that strong personal attitude drives women to achieve superior performance in entrepreneurship.

Islam is a practical religion which encourages its believers to work and participate in all sorts of productive activities and to strive in order to earn a living. Entrepreneurship is among the activities that are highly encouraged and praised in Islam (Abeng, 1997; Dana, 1997, Ramadani, Dana, Ratten and Tahiri, 2015). Most particularly, as noted by Lucky (2011), Islam encourages entrepreneurial activities as the source of income. Apart from the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was known to have engaged in entrepreneurial activities and it well acknowledged that he considered entrepreneurship activities as part of religious activities. Hence, being part of religious activities, striving to succeed in entrepreneurship in this world, may lead one to achieve success in the hereafter. In addition, Ramadani, Dana, Ratten and Tahiri (2015) argued that entrepreneurship enhances religious duty through the implementation of Islamic teachings and practices. Although the success in the hereafter may refer to paradise, the worldly rewards might be in the form of Allah's blessing or *Barakah* which according to Al-Qurtabi (2000) stands for surplus. Thus, Mohsen (2007) stated that "*the effects of Allah's blessings or Barakah could be reflected in the business organisation's performance in the form of better*

efficiency, productivity, easiness and accomplishment of tasks in much shorter time” (p.73). As such, this conviction will motivate Muslims with the mission of business *Jihad* not only to be very entrepreneurial but will also propel them to succeed in order to have dual rewards in both this world and the hereafter. In addition, Jabnoun (2008) asserted that the quality and excellent performance in any job is emphasised in the teachings of Islam. Similarly, Allah Almighty in the *Qur'an* (2:201) encourages Muslims to be productive, sincere and careful in managing entrepreneurial venture. This is further stressed by the following *Hadits*:

“Allah, the Almighty wants that when one of you does a job, he or she does it well” (Al-Bayhaqi 4:5312).

The philosophy of business *Jihad* inspires an entrepreneur to always operate in a virtuous and socially responsible manner regardless of the financial consequences. In this regard the Holy *Qur'an* says:

“Then shall anyone who has done an atom’s weight of good see it: and anyone who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it” (Qur’an, 99:7-8)

Verily we have warned you of a penalty of war, the day when man will see (the deeds) which his hands have sent forth (Qur’an, 78:40)

Thus, it can be seen that an element of responsibility which will serve as a deterrent from being stubbornly disobedient is introduced in one’s life through the concept of accountability, in the hereafter. As such, the will and pleasure of Allah becomes paramount over and placed well above personal interests (Khaliq, 2011).

3 Methods

The study collected data based on in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted by the researchers. An extensive review of relevant literature streams led to the identification of a broad research problem that was explicated into a series of specific research questions. In the current study, qualitative methods were used by the researchers in order to explore and understand the opinions and experiences of the respondents on the issue studied. A quantitative research method may be ideal to study an average; but qualitative research may focus instead on marginal (Dana and Dana,

2005). Qualitative data includes direct quotations from people about their attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, intentions, actions and experiences (Dana and Dana, 2005). Given the nature of this study, the method is considered to be the best means to explore and understand the opinions and experiences of the respondents in respect of their philosophy of business *Jihad*. This position is in line with Berg (2007) assertion that the use of pre-determined questions provides context and meaning beyond the ordinary answers. Based on the nature of this study, Berg (2007) affirmed that an in-depth semi-structured interview is appropriate as it allows interviewer the freedom to explore far beyond the answers as well as enables the researchers to identify the main issues related to the integration of business *Jihad* by the entrepreneurs. The findings of this study are mainly based on comprehensive qualitative data that have generated a pattern of findings and suggested a direction for building a comprehensive approach to developmental work with the entrepreneurs (Dana and Dumez, 2015). According to Dana and Dumez (2015), a qualitative scientific research has to avoid the risk of abstract actors by clearly determining a unit of analysis, the risk of circularity by asking appropriate questions, and the risk of collinearity, outliers, and counterfactual reasoning or equifinality by conducting multi-level analyses.

3.1 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposeful sampling was employed to select the nine entrepreneurs who participated in the research. The participants were well-established business owners from various business sectors who have already achieved a million marks in their ventures. As shown in Table 1 below, the participants included 6 males and 3 females from various sectors such as oil and gas, training, restaurant, and cosmetics. The participants have averagely extensive experience in entrepreneurial management ranging from 4 to 30 years. Again, since all the participants are practicing Muslims, it is expected that religious beliefs and values play a vital and key role in their professional behaviors, decisions and actions (Sulaiman and Bhatti, 2013).

Table 1: Profile of participants

Respondents & Code	Gender	Nature of Business	Years of Operation
Respondent 1 (R1)	Female	Training	15

Respondent 2 (R2)	Male	Oil & Gas	20
Respondent 3 (R3)	Female	Oil & Gas	10
Respondent 4 (R4)	Female	Training & Consultancy	30
Respondent 5 (R5)	Male	Restaurant & Catering	29
Respondent 6 (R6)	Male	Health & Beauty	4
Respondent 7 (R7)	Female	Halal Products	7
Respondent 8 (R8)	Male	Frozen Yogurt	4
Respondent 9 (R9)	Female	Cosmetics	7

3.2 Data Collection and Analytical Procedures

This research conducted face-to face interviews with each session taking the duration between forty-five to one-hour thirty minutes. The study respondents were asked several open-ended questions based on the objective of the research. Before the interview commenced, ethical issues were addressed. Each participant was duly informed of the objective of the research, his/her consent for the interview and audio recording of the conversation was sought, and confidentiality was assured. Also, the right to withdraw at any point of the interview was stressed. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim in Microsoft Word. Analysis began when all the interviews were completed. Following the guidelines by Miles and Huberman (1994), a coding template was manually developed to organise the data into common coherent themes or categories using thematic analysis. A theme refers to a specific pattern found in the data in which the informants showed their interest. In addition, following Dana and Dumez (2015), to avoid the risk of circularity and the risk of collinearity, outliers, and counterfactual reasoning or equifinality, the interview results were rated by independent researchers and subject matter experts in the field of entrepreneurship.

4 Results and Discussions

This section presents the detailed transcript from the respondents, and it will be elaborated in the discussion. The results obtained from the study are

based on the entrepreneur's motivation and their performances: the perception that business is a religious activity or business *Jihad* and leadership practices that result in business performance. Each theme is presented below, and the explanation is illustrated with quotes from the transcript. In addition, the findings are aligned with literature.

4.1 Business Jihad and its effects on entrepreneurial motivation

When asked to comment on business as a form of *Jihad*, varied responses emerged to demonstrate the participants' understanding of the issue. However, all respondents concurred that they were engaged in the form of *Jihad* through entrepreneurship pursuit in one way or another. For instance, business is considered as *Jihad* because it is a promise, a means of financial support for the family, a contribution to the *Ummah* and a source of income to pay *zakat*. Below are the respondents' remarks on the issue:

To me, business is a great Jihad, because whatever you do for Allah is Jihad, especially business because it is a promise.....To me, anything you do well to Allah is business, every day we do business with Allah. Allah will pay back. I try to give the best that I can...using my own knowledge, skills, and experience. Jihad is living for the sake of Allah. Jihad is giving, in terms of wealth, time, and strength. We need to develop Jihad among us, and do our business in a happy manner (R1).

R1 argued that business *Jihad* is an avenue to seek rewards in the hereafter by seeking the pleasure of Allah. This reflection is different from rent-seeking or profit-making behaviour and thus, business *Jihad* is regarded as part of religious duties which is in line with previous studies conducted by Vargas-Hernández, Noruzi and Sariolghalam (2010), who explored the effects of Islamic culture on entrepreneurial behaviours in Muslim countries.

Yet another respondent mentioned the following:

Business is a form of Jihad, especially for single mothers, because they have to take care of their children, help their family, pay their bills, and settle debt sometimes. Even for men it is a form of Jihad because they will be supporting their family. It is Jihad for every Muslim who has the right intention. If the person does not have

the right intention then it is not Jihad. So business is a form of Jihad which depends on the person's intention (R9).

Indeed, the reflection of R9 is in line with women entrepreneurship in the informal economy, to secure the well-being of family and the society (Ratten, 2016; Anggadwita and Dhewanto, 2016).

While another respondent remarked that:

Yes of course, business is a form of Jihad. Business is Jihad in the sense of how do you contribute to the Ummah (R2).

The essence of contribution argued by R2 has long been practiced by women entrepreneurs who contributed to the growth of the informal economy (Ratten, 2016; Anggadwita and Dhewanto, 2016).

This is echoed by the following respondents:

Business is Jihad; Jihad is a business. We make money to perform Jihad, to boost our economy and give to our community, to education, to infrastructure (R3).

R3 contended that *Jihad* is a form of general worship, which has an impact on the vertical relationship with Allah and the horizontal relationship with humanity (Ramadani, Dana, Ratten and Tahiri, 2015; Fontaine, 2011). In her context, the benefits are specifically focused on education and infrastructure sectors.

Yes definitely, business is a form of business Jihad. Allah said 90% of Rizki is coming from business, if we are working and doing business, we get 100%, so the more we work, the more we make money, the more we can give back to our society. Muslims must be rich in any form, to be able to give back to the society. If we don't have money, how can we pay our zakat? So Muslims have to have money to pay zakat and help others (R4).

R4 contended that the sharing spirit is necessary for the contexts of the bounties from Allah. The sharing can be done through the zakat obligation and also charity (Vargas-Hernández, Noruzi, and Sariolghalam, 2010).

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Jihad is not just sacrifice but you fight in the name of Allah and expecting good things. You believe that when you do good things, Allah will make it easy for you. I want my employees to feel the luxury that I feel. My Jihad is I want to bring a culture whereby we work together and I want to build them to give a better life to them and their family and something that they couldn't get elsewhere-job satisfaction. For me, when I put my heart and soul to develop them, I really thought of it as a Jihad (R8).

R8 placed *Jihad* in the contexts beyond individual and family circles. *Jihad* is embedded in their way of life. This practice should not only be confined to individual but to the society as well.

We consider our business as a form of Jihad because when you go into business, you will be paying zakat, you will not be dependent on anybody... and when we do business you will be employing people, and when you employ people, you will also help their families and their families will pay zakat and help other Muslims...that will relieve the stress, the fight, the divorce... It is a chain reaction... that will keep the Ummah together instead of them breaking up. Therefore I believe that this business is very important form of Jihad, and also this is a place where people gather, where Muslims meet other Muslims, interact, and hence improve 'silaturrahim' among them (R5).

R5 stated that *Jihad* as an enabler to practice the pillars of Islam, that is zakat. While executing individual obligatory duty in Islam, zakat empowers the society with financial support to live in this world in peace and dignity.

In simple way, business is a part of Jihad because business is about providing solutions. As for our product Gorgeous, we provide solutions to Malaysians where they can buy stem cell products at affordable price. And yet, on the part of it, Go Cell also provides employment opportunities, so that is a part of Jihad..... In a way, we are providing solutions of Halal stem cells and at the same time, our members can get more income. Our Jihad is to help them make more money (R6).

As for R6, *Jihad* also exists in the form of providing solutions to the problems faced by society. When the society is in dire need of *Halal*

products for religious consumptions, the provision of *Halal* products would prevent the Muslim society from consuming *Haram* (prohibited) and unhealthy products.

Actually Hiraq is already 7 years. We started in year 2006. At that time I'm still working with TV3 but the intention of Jihad economy comes when we always face Halal problems. Since we were with Al-Hidayah at that time, we worked closely with PPIM and we discovered all these problems. When you're doing Muslim TV programs, there is no sponsorship at all, whereas our ratings are higher than any of other programs. From there I realized that Muslims have to be rich to do something for the Ummah (R7).

Jihad is also present as a form of campaign for *Halal* consumption. R7 argued that when Muslims realised the Muslim society's dire need for *Halal* consumption, it causes a high level of motivation to venture into entrepreneurship.

It is evident from the above quotes that the respondents held a clear perspective regarding business *Jihad*. They considered entrepreneurship as a religious obligation or business *Jihad* rather than just a means to self-enrichment. This corresponded with the results obtained in other studies (Nik, 2003; Fontaine, 2011; Vargas-Hernández et al., 2010; Fadli, 2011; Azmi and Yaacob, 2012; Ismail et al., 2006). For instance, previous studies conducted by researchers (Ismail et al., 2006) suggested that Muslim entrepreneurs should be in the business for the purpose of developing themselves, their family and community. Similarly, findings by Fontaine (2011) suggested that the desire to make money and spend it on charity to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty forms the Muslims entrepreneurs' main motivation for venturing into business.

Furthermore, business *Jihad* had also motivated them to develop a number of strategies to achieve their business success. For instance, R5 affirmed that one needs to acquire knowledge and skills to be successful:

*In order for one to achieve a vision, he or she must go through a jumbled road and many obstacles, nothing is given for free. We may need many skills in order to achieve missions and visions.....
Collect skills to enrich my own awareness, knowledge and skills.*

In the same vein, R9 concurs:

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We must learn about everything that is going around us so that we can broaden our knowledge, adapt. Otherwise we will be stuck with old principles.

On the other hand, R7 stressed the importance of striving for the best by exerting all possible efforts. She specifically said that:

For me, the success in the hereafter is the most important. So to accomplish that mission, you have to try you're very best to have all the moments with everything that Allah and Prophet's love. Your business, your family and your religion must come together.

In addition, some respondents have a strategy in choosing their role models who become their mentors. R1 mentioned that:

My mentors are mostly outside Malaysia. I consider a few ministers as my role models as well. I take a few things from each speaker and then work on them to develop my own way of presenting.

She also felt that her motivation and work ethics taught her not to stop at any point; to employ positive thinking and operationalise her actions in order to drive her success.

My formula is to never say no and to never give up. Positive thinking, positive mind, positive action.

Whereas R9 claimed that motivation might come from the family; that was why she gave more focus on filial piety as well as piety to Allah Almighty. She also mentioned that only Allah Almighty could help a situation where no one can help.

Obedience to your parents, obedience to your husband, put Allah and the Prophet first. If Allah cannot help you then no one else can. Do what Allah asks you to do, and leave what he asked you not to do. In everything you do, you must have compassion, patience, you must be just, by listening to both sides of the story, all these are the secrets to success.

R9 mentioned that his motivation was derived from public relations. He mentioned that customers were his main motivation to boost his

accomplishment. McShane and Glinow (2010) mentioned that motivation is the forces within an individual which influence the direction, force, and industriousness of intentional conduct.

My passion was meeting new people. In the restaurant business you meet new people every day. I really enjoy talking and meeting people. I felt that my PR skills are good and I should take advantage of that. I also speak different languages; I speak different Chinese dialects which is an advantage as 50 to 60 percent of our customers are Chinese. I realized that when I worked with a restaurant before setting up my own, in 6 months only I managed to double their sales but I wasn't much appreciated by the boss there, so I said why should I be doing this for someone else instead of doing it for myself. It's when I decided to open my own business.

Birley and Westhead (1994) identified several motivational factors such as the need for approval, the need for independence and the need for personal development. Others include the need for achievement and the need for financial rewards.

In short, business *Jihad* has various significant effects on entrepreneurial motivations. The motivations included seeking the pleasure of Allah Almighty (R1), contributing to the community's economic development (R2), providing education and infrastructure (R3), sharing wealth (R4), enabling the practice of *Zakat* (R5), providing solutions (R6), fulfilling the needs of society (R7), carrying out social responsibilities (R8), and supporting the well-being of family and society (R9).

4.2 Business Jihad and its effects on entrepreneurial performance

One of the pillars of business *Jihad* demands Muslim entrepreneurs to struggle against their inner self or ambitions for, desires and lust in pursuing personal gain and wealth. R1 mentioned this pertaining to his performance:

Having a healthy and strong family relationship is the foundation of thriving communities which is important for the positive development of a nation. Therefore, good families build a good society which is crucial for the success of a country in all aspects and to ensure society performs well.

However, R3 stated that her business success was primarily based on her motivation by changing her mindset and skillset. According to her:

My sales increased significantly from RM 3,000 to RM 3,000,000 a month. My life started to change not only business but also my character”.

According to the teaching of *Al-Qur'an*, a Muslim who engages in *Jihad* is granted the ultimate reward, that is, paradise itself. Consequently, engaging in business *Jihad* through self-control and participation in charitable activities by entrepreneurs is a way to paradise and improve their performance in the business field. Based on the concept of business *Jihad*, R6 claimed that his business incentive plan helped to produce successful entrepreneurs among his distributors:

We wanted to help to produce more millionaires.....That's why we launched the “Power of Six” –one intensive marketing plan which is simple and effective to be implemented by duplication. There are various incentives available for our successful distributors such as Incentive RM 3,000, RM 7,000, RM 10,000, RM 50,000 and RM 200,000 for achieving a certain sales level. So, distributors can enjoy a weekly bonus from RM 1,000 until RM 200,000.

In addition, another respondent said:

I had a group sale of RM 50 million when I was active as a sales leader for a beauty company. Now, I have been appointed as the chairperson for a skin care product focusing on Halal anti-ageing product because the global market for anti-ageing products will touch USD 274.5 billion this year and we expect our product to be well-received by the Muslims and non-Muslims. So, in terms of sales, the target is to sell 50,000 units of our advanced skin-reviving serum by the end of this year (R4).

R4 contended that health products offer vast opportunities to create wealth for the family, society and country.

R5 mentioned that his entrepreneurial performance was influenced by the motivation derived from public relations and customer satisfactions. According mentioned earlier, McShane and Glinow (2010) stressed that entrepreneurial motivation is the forces within an individual which influence the direction, force, and industriousness of intentional conduct.

Our group of restaurants is well recognised as it has 18 branches worldwide and still growing strong. In 2009/2010 we were awarded as the Best Malaysian Indian Restaurant in Malaysia by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia. We also received the Recognition of "ASEAN's Most Recognized Brand" from the ASEAN Retail Chain and Franchise Federation (Malaysian Chapter) in 2010/2011 from the Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Yassin.

In addition, R7 said that she invested more to win the heart of her customers.

We invested about RM 1 million for our factory in Shah Alam and have had various testimonials from our happy customers. All our products have been well received because of their health benefits.

In terms of business performance, R2 reported that:

...We are proud to receive the Outstanding Investee Companies award by the Malaysian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (MVCA) as a few innovative and investment-worthy companies in Malaysia. This recognition serves as an indicator of R.E.A.L's significant growth and overall performance in recent years.

On the other hand, R9 dreamed to achieve her 1st billion target in sales:

"In the next 10 years, we strive to compete with giant companies with an annual sales turnover of RM 1 billion".

As discussed previously, business *Jihad* has significant effects on entrepreneurial performance through creating a healthy and happy family

(R1), significant growth (R2), high sales target (R3 and R4), outstanding awards (R5), attractive financial incentives (R6), customer satisfaction (R7) and an aspiration to achieve RM 1 billion in revenues (R9). Thus, it is evident from the above findings that Muslim entrepreneurs who adopt the philosophy of business *Jihad* will be highly motivated to drive their business to a higher level of performance.

5 Conclusions

The findings of this study have enriched our understanding in terms of the entrepreneurs' perception of business *Jihad* and its integration in their entrepreneurship experiences. The findings of this research supported the argument that entrepreneurs in Malaysia use their spirituality and moral values to enhance their performance via their motivation. This qualitative study has investigated to what extent entrepreneurial motivation drives the success small and medium enterprise in Malaysia.

It is evident from the findings that the participants of this study adhere to the principles of business *Jihad* by engaging in positive virtues such as self-control and participation in charitable activities in the business world. The findings further revealed that the participants' engagement in these positive virtues is driven by their religious values rather than the desire for economic gains. It is also evident that the respondents hold a clear perspective regarding business *Jihad*. It is also important to note that they consider entrepreneurship as a religious obligation or *Fardhu Kifayah* to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty rather than just a means to self-enrichment. Through entrepreneurship, they carry out the business *Jihad* by establishing and running a business based on Islamic principles, providing job opportunities and creating a business network to help one another.

In conclusion, business *Jihad* when applied in the context of entrepreneurship can play a vital role in the development of entrepreneurs' performance. Therefore, it is essential to identify the effects of business *Jihad* on entrepreneurs' motivation and performance especially Muslims who have been successful in their business ventures in Malaysia. Nevertheless, this research is an in-depth qualitative study and thus, cannot be used for generalisation purposes. As such, a replication of this study using a quantitative method with a large sample and broad geographical base is highly recommended for cross-validation purposes. Finally, it is also noted that further research should be considered for ethical behavioural issues in the context of entrepreneurship as mentioned by other researchers (Ratten, 2016; Ramadani, Gërguri, Dana and Tašaminova, 2013; Ribeiro, Rezaei and Dana, 2012).

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