

Volume Two of Two Synthesis & Critical Analysis

‘Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and preparedness support for the sustainable growth of Ethnic Minority-led MSEs.’

A critical analysis to clarify the how, why and what would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for ethnic minority-led micro-small enterprises and the strategic importance of the alternative approaches including practice implications.

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A submission presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of South Wales/Prifysgol De Cymru for the award of PhD by Portfolio.

December 2024

Declaration

This is to certify that, except where specific reference is made, the work described in this thesis is the result of the author's own research. Neither this thesis nor any part of it has been presented or is currently submitted in candidature for any other award at this or any other University.

Signed  (candidate)

Date.....18TH DECEMBER 2024.....

Abstract

In this second volume of this doctoral research study, the author, as a researcher, appraises, critically analyses and ultimately addresses the research questions arising from the reflective review of the portfolio of practitioner-based projects as detailed in volume one. The outcomes from the portfolio of practitioner-based projects uniquely contribute to theory in seven dimensions by answering the research questions:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

The study was systematically grounded in theory. Starting with a preliminary grounding of an asset-based approach to community capacity development aided by the studies of Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019). Harrison et al. (2019) study is particularly the closest study to the doctoral research.

Additionally, the UK-based and US-based studies on preferential procurement initiatives by Woldesenbet et al., (2018), Shelton et al., (2018) and Pan et al., (2022) provide components of the theoretical underpinning of this doctoral study. On the other hand, the wider studies provide components of the theoretical underpinning to the relationship typology in collaborative engagements and enterprise policy and practice implications.

Data from practice is based on the three projects undertaken over a period. These practitioner-based projects, despite being uniquely different, are also uniquely connected. Specifically, the capacity-building approach to market access and sustainable growth through the model of asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration between the community businesses and the authority.

Project One, as a ‘test and learn’ project, strategically supports Bristol City Council’s aim of better social care outcomes for citizens from Black, Asian, and Minoritised (BAM) communities by diversifying its supply chain through capacity-building BAM organisations to enter the Adult Social Care (ASC) market. In addition, and more broadly, the aim is to aid the business development and sustainability of BAM businesses.

Project Two is a ‘tailored’ project to deliver the Islington Council’s strategic objectives of supporting business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in building their resilience and capacity to enable the ongoing running of their businesses and to equip them to navigate the enterprise market strategically.

Project Three is ‘blended’ support to deliver the Islington Council’s strategic objectives to early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly those from BAME backgrounds, including female entrepreneurs and those with a disability, to help address disproportionate and significant barriers to success. Stated as difficulty securing finance and accessing business support to kickstart their ideas and support them in growing and sustaining their businesses.

Study Rationale

Research Title: Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and sustainable growth of Black, Asian and Minority-led Micros-Small Enterprises: A qualitative study to critically assess the factors that promote effective engagement and preparedness support for market access and sustainable growth of these entities, BAM-MSEs.

Research Gaps: The asset-based community development studies conducted in South Africa by Pretorius & Nel (2012), as well as a study conducted by a US researcher, Bruursema (2015), who examines three case studies of asset-based development from Ethiopia, Taiwan, and Guatemala and the UK-based study in North West of England by Harrison et al., (2019) purport ABCD as a vehicle of structural change to support the empowerment of disadvantaged communities to engage in decision-making and meet their aspirations. All 3 studies posit the ABCD as a relationship-driven model. However, the studies, in particular, the UK-based qualitative study with community practitioners on narratives, practice and conditions of possibilities of ABCD approach in meeting the needs of disadvantaged populations identified a limitation as the absence of the best relationship model and emergent properties in ABCD approach (Harrison et al., 2019).

Additionally, the studies on preferential procurement initiatives by the UK-based study, Woldesenbet & Worthington (2018) and US-based studies by Shelton & Minniti (2018) and Pan et al., (2022) provided a theoretical grounding for the PhD thesis. However, knowledge gaps were identified, which the doctoral study addresses.

Woldesenbet & Worthington (2018) study on Public Procurement and Small Businesses. The study explored how “under-represented” (women, ethnic minorities, and social entrepreneurs) business owners engage with public procurement opportunities. It was a qualitative study with a sample size of 20 small businesses. Their study highlights that the sample size limits the generalizability of the highly customised firm-and-sector-specific business support to implicate practice and enterprise policy.

Shelton & Minniti (2018) study on enhancing market access for Minority entrepreneurship, status leveraging, and preferential procurement programs. The study included governmental supplier diversity initiatives with a sample population of higher growth entrepreneurs from the US Inc 5000 list. A list that includes only firms with at least \$100,000 in revenue in 2019 and \$2M in 2022. Their study group income ranged from \$0.5M to \$10M. They reported a well-designed and contextualised programme with cultural sensitivity to facilitate access. However, the study recognises the limitation of generalizability to financially lower-ranked firms and calls for studies outside of Los Angeles and on lower-ranked businesses.

Pan et al., (2022) study explored participation in intermediaries-sponsored procurement activities and how developing relationships by connecting minoritised businesses to government contracts impacts minority business growth. A quantitative study of 113 participants reported exposure to growth opportunities through the deepening of relationships. However, their study identified limitations in addressing the generalizability of the preferential procurement programs approach brokered through intermediary agencies outside of the US, including conducting qualitative research to gain deep insights into the dynamics of relationships formed through intermediaries.

Furthermore, studies from the wider literature on human interaction within operational and partnership environments provided fundamental knowledge in addressing relationship typology, which uniquely informed a new concept in enterprise support. The criticality of wider literature provided insight into the implications of procurement approaches in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprise policy.

Research Contributions:

Contribution 1

Specifically, the doctoral study contributes a new concept to the business support research field by ***uniquely developing a novel framework of relationship typology***

to advance knowledge in relationship-driven engagement approaches and resultant outcomes in enterprise support.

Contribution 2

Specifically, the doctoral study advances knowledge by **uniquely adapting asset-based community development into enterprise support** to develop a **novel concept of asset-based relational relationship capacity support** for the sustainable economic impact of ME-MSEs in enterprise development. This provides an answer to research question R3b on sustaining change, namely sustained growth.

Contribution 3

Specifically, the doctoral study advances knowledge by adding to the body of literature on small and minoritised-led businesses to implicate effective enterprise policy by **uniquely contributing a novel concept of community inclusion relational approach in policy formulation to implicate practice** and enhance the socioeconomic procurement approaches and equitable inclusion of ME and MSEs in economic opportunities. This provides an answer to research question 4 (R4).

Contribution 4

The broader preliminary answer to research question one (R1) of this doctoral study on approaches that facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access of BAM-MSEs through the notion of them as local-based community assets specifically answer the call of Harrison et al., (2019) on the best practice model relationship and emergent properties in asset-based community capacity development. **This uniquely emerged as a relational relationship for the best practice model relationship characterised by integration, motivation and progressive factors.** Additionally, the criticality of practice findings with extant knowledge of EMBs as local assets exposed the knowledge gap in business support research papers. Finally, the gap in extant knowledge on relationship typology was also exposed. The PhD thesis **uniquely contributes to these additional gaps through Contributions 2 and 1, respectively.**

Contribution 5

The answer to research question one (R1a) of this doctoral study on approaches that facilitate capacity support for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services answers the call by Woldesenbet et al., (2018)

to address the generalizability of the highly customised firm-and-sector-specific business support and its implication in practice and enterprise policy. The results of all three unique projects supported the effectiveness of a highly customised programme, as evidenced by the positive outcomes. Thus, adding to the body of extant theories and uniquely strengthening ***the case to implicate enterprise policy and practice.***

Contribution 6

The answer to research questions one (R1b) and two (R2) of this doctoral study on approaches that facilitate equitable market access of BAM-led MSEs using alternative models such as preferential procurement approaches answer and extend the call by Shelton et al., (2018) to address the generalizability of the approach to preferential procurement programs outside of Los Angeles and to financially lower-ranked firms. Their study included ethnic businesses from Inc. 5000 lists with turnover from under \$0.5M to \$10M. A list that includes only firms with at least \$100,000 in revenue in 2019 and \$2M in 2022. The positive outcomes delivered by the PhD study confirm the impact of procurement initiatives on ethnic-minorities businesses in answer to R1a. However, this PhD practice finding is critical of their study and extends knowledge to uniquely ***highlight, irrespective of entrepreneur revenue status, the application of an equitable systemic approach to procurement opportunities supports the market access of Micro-Small Enterprises (MSEs). Thus, impacting supplier diversity by facilitating market access for BAM-led MSEs to meet the strategic intention of commissioners*** in answer to R2.

Contribution 7

The answer to research question three (R3a) of this doctoral study on approaches that facilitate market growth of BAM-led MSEs answers the call by Pan et al., (2022) to address the generalizability of the preferential procurement programs approach brokered through intermediary agencies outside of the US. Including conducting qualitative research to gain deep insights into the dynamics of relationships formed through intermediaries. The PhD study highlights the positive impact of intermediary agencies as relationship brokers as evidenced by the practice outcomes on all three projects across two intermediary agencies. However, the practice finding is critical of the sustainability of growth, which the PhD thesis identified and, therefore, extends the extant study specifically by contributing a ***targeted relational relationship that uniquely emerged to sustain growth. Characterised by ongoing integration, motivation and progressive collaboration and underpinned by the unique and critical sub-themes - listening, peer support network and mutuality*** to sustain the market growth of MEB-MSEs and answers R3b. Additionally, the criticality of practice findings with extant knowledge of relationship typology exposed the knowledge gap in

business support research papers which this **thesis uniquely contributes to. Specifically, ‘transactional’, ‘functional’, ‘transformational’, and ‘relational’ relationships and the emergent factors.**

Consequentially, the criticality of the practice findings with theory exposed theoretical knowledge gaps and, therefore, calls for a new framework in the business support of minority ethnic micro-small enterprises and the research sector.

Overall, the unique contribution of this doctoral study is the theoretical development that advances the understanding of the best approach to sustainable market access and growth of minority ethnic-led micro-small enterprises. A cultural perspective intertwined with systemic enablement enhanced by targeted relational relationships and targeted market support is presented, which helps to address the socio-economic context of minority ethnics’ exclusion from the process of public market opportunities. The discussion presented in the paper aids knowledge advancement of the complex issues related to minority ethnic market support engagement; issues such as lack of contextualised support, short-lived intervention, restricted access due to racial bias, cultural barriers, key network exclusions, capability bias and entrepreneurial time constraints. For policymakers, this study provides insight into the socio-economic capabilities of minority ethnic enterprises and the implications of procurement approaches in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprise policy.

Portfolio Approach: Review of practitioner-based projects commissioned by local authorities to develop the capacity of ethnic-led businesses, enablement of market opportunities, and sustainable growth. Through the portfolio of three test-and-learn, ground-breaking projects, critically assess the factors that enable effective approaches to engagement and capacity support of these entities to impact their immediate and future successes positively.

Academic Building Blocks: The Ethnic-Led Entrepreneurial Origins | Racial Disparity | Covid Context | Asset-Based Community Dimensions | Enterprise Support Dimensions | Product-Market Economic Dimensions | Socio-Economic Sustainability Dimensions | Relationship-Building Dimensions.

Language: The author is committed to using inclusive language, which recognises that *“language that relates to race is complex and always in a state of flux”* (Erica Foldy, New York University, August 2020). The author respects, where possible, individual preferences and society’s diversity. In this study, the author has reflected on the terminology used in the source materials from local authorities, extant literature, published reports, etc., to include Ethnic minority (EM), Minority Ethnic (ME), Black, Asian and Minority (BAM) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

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Chapter One – The Volume Introduction

In this second volume of the doctoral research study, the author explores and gains theoretical insight into the research area. That is, the theoretical approaches to business support and market access for the phenomenon being studied to help address the research aim below.

“Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and sustainable growth of Minority ethnic-led Micro-Small Enterprises (ME-MSEs)”

Subsequently, the author as a researcher appraises, critically analyses extant insight and ultimately addresses the research questions arising from the reflective review of the portfolio of practitioner-based projects as detailed in volume one. That is

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

This is of significance in contributing to the theoretical development in advancing the understanding of the best approach to sustainable market access and growth of minority ethnic-led micro-small enterprises. Invariably to help address the socio-economic context of minority ethnics' exclusion from the process of mainstream market opportunities. Additionally, the insight gained is strategically important for the commissioners to encourage the participation of ethnic minority businesses as potential grantees and/or contract suppliers. In order to enable their access to procurement frameworks and/or navigate the UK mainstream enterprise landscape to positively impact supplier diversity and enable the achievement of the authorities' ultimate strategic objectives of delivering better outcomes for community members and sustainable economic prosperity of local minority ethnic businesses. Invariably, it provides insight into the socio-economic capabilities of minority ethnic enterprises that could implicate policymakers in procurement approaches to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprise policy.

1.1. Volume Two Overview

The first volume of this doctoral study detailed the three unique projects and the findings in practice, setting the scene for the theoretical underpinning of this volume. This second volume explores and gains theoretical insight into the research area, that is, the theoretical approaches to business support and market access for the phenomenon being studied, to help address the research aim below.

“Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and sustainable growth of Minority ethnic-led Micro-Small Enterprises (ME-MSEs)”

The three pieces of literature closest to the research and selected by the author collectively provide underpinning theoretical knowledge. However, there are gaps in theory, which this PhD study uncovered and answered through the three considerable projects. The knowledge gained from the extant literature critical analysis, combined with the learning from the projects, contributes new knowledge to the field.

1.1.1 *The Background Context*

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded an unprecedented wave of void in the government's accessibility to communities (Olareswaju et al., 2023). In particular, the ethnic minority communities (Mahmood et al., 2021). Arising from pre-existing distrust and poor engagement (Kamal et al., 2021). Thus, creating a barrier during the UK lockdown period for these communities. Integral fabrics of the ethnic minority communities, including faith groups, non-essential businesses, community organisations and support networks, became inaccessible (Mahmood et al., 2021).

Conversely, the gap bridging was of necessity to mobilise essentials to these communities. As food poverty and digital poverty surge (I Litchfield, D Shukla and S Greenfield, 2021). Further compounded by language and cultural barriers (Mahmood et al., 2021). Culminating in reluctance to vaccination. Reported as much higher among ethnic minority groups (L H Nguyen et al., 2021). They also reported higher morbidity and mortality in these groups. The distrusted institutions were forced to embark on a strategic rethink. Embracing inclusive communications through community leaders, trusted professionals and communicators to disseminate information (Mahmood et al., 2021).

Congruent with Kamal et al., (2021), who reported collaborative approaches with ethnic community networks and leaders to facilitate community engagement emerged. With increased representation and visibility of ethnic groups in communication. Further posited increased support provision to local groups to set up food banks, community

shopping and delivery, and distribution of protective equipment (Mahmood et al., 2021). Authorities covertly or overtly relaxed their regulatory rules to permit informal groups or contracted community organisations to pivot and channel delivery to meet local needs (Harris, 2021). However, the prolonged uncertainty of the pandemic precipitated, job losses (Harris, 2021). Impacting the lower-paid jobs (M S Razai, H K N Kankam, A Majeed, A Esmail and D R Williams, 2021). Reported by Mahmood et al., (2021) as exacerbating the economic disparity experienced by ethnic groups.

Conversely, Korede et al., (2023) stated the social cohesion and ingenuity of the community shone amid this disadvantaged position. Historically acquainted with a high-risk environment engulfed with uncertainties and constraints due to racial, cultural, skills, knowledge, and experience differences (Duan et al., 2021). Their human and social capital as assets to mobilise resources accorded them long-overdue value and recognition (Korede et al., 2023). Capitalising on the government business support schemes (BM Razzak, B Idris, R Hasan, G Saridakis and J M Hansen, 2023). Coupled with a less rigorous grant or contract application process (Bates, 2022). Engendering entrepreneurial motivation (A Fayolle, F Linan and JA Moriano, 2014). Purported as a 'pull' factor promoting autonomy and wealth generation (Martinez-Cañas et al., 2023). Additionally, with an increased recognition and status (V Barba-Sanchez and C Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018).

Consequentially, the pandemic era reversed the unintended consequence of the unlikelihood of sustained growth as opportunities emerged to pivot (D Hack-Polay, PA Igwe and NO Madichie, 2020), (MZ Rahman, F Ullah and P Thompson, 2018). Conversely, not void of criticism by mainstream research as non-innovative entrepreneurship (Korede, 2021), (Strüder, 2003). Denoted as causative factors of reduced customer base and growth (Korede, 2021).

Notwithstanding, the pandemic-enforced non-stringent processes and need-led engagement of these local assets paved the way for increased emergent support groups (Harris, 2021). And business innovation and development (M Lounsbury, J Cornelissen, N Granqvist and S Grodal, 2019), (P Lassalle and JM Scott, 2018). Reinforced by the support of ethnic-led intermediary community organisations acting as the bridge between the community and commissioners (Mahmood et al., 2021). Invariably fostering an appetite for dialogue and conversations on mechanisms of change previously cursory (Macmillan, 2020a). The local assets and the authorities are pulled together to envision a common goal (Gruidl et al., 2014). In order to explore better ways of engagement and market support to enable improved services to the local people. An approach purported by Pretorius and Nel (2012) as ABCD. Congruent with Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019).

1.1.2 Project One: Make It Work (MIW) Programme

A Southwest England-based 'test and learn' project to strategically support Bristol City Council's aim of better social care outcomes for citizens from Black, Asian and Minoritised (BAM) communities by diversifying its supply chain through capacity building BAM organisations to enter into the Adult Social Care (ASC) market. Also, more broadly, to aid the business development and sustainability of BAM businesses.

The programme's main aim is to support ten organisations to be in a strong business position to bid for ASC-commissioned contracts successfully. Additionally, more broadly, to aid business sustainability and development. There is also the intention to use the learning from the programme to shape adult social care commissioning on many levels. Including improving entry into delivering various models of care and redesigning care specifications so they're easier to read. Lastly, as a way of influencing contracting processes so they can be more suitable for Black and Asian organisations and residents.

The objectives of the programme are:

- Increasing supply chain diversity and economic opportunities for MEBs in ASC
- Enhancing overall access to care via alternative financial models for ME/MEBs
- Improving the quality of service for citizens from minority ethnic backgrounds

The objectives were the agreed outcomes against which to benchmark programme success.

As with every project, there is a detailed draft project plan. This commences with the initiation stage, which includes signing off on the agreement between Bristol City Council and Black South-West Network, who commissioned the author. To a broad outline of the programme activity to determine topics for themed workshop sessions. Facilitated by the author and presented by BCC and some external contributors. Other support activities later included a range of themed peer support. Aside from the contextualised and personalised one-to-one intensive business support delivered by the author to the participating organisation leads.

The programme was advertised through various channels, as BSWN has a good network of grassroots organisations. Initially, purposive sampling was adopted, but later, a snowball approach was employed to recruit eligible participants. The high interest level generated 22 successful applicants against a target of 10. The programme was initially commissioned for a year, from April 2021 to March 2022. However, an extension was granted to March 2023 as rich learning emerged in the first year, with early indications of potential successes if extended.

1.1.3 Project Two: Enterprise Support (ES) Programme

A Southeast England-based ‘tailored’ project to deliver the council’s strategic objectives to support business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds to build their resilience and capacity. To keep their businesses running and to equip them to strategically navigate the enterprise landscape in the UK.

The Enterprise Support programme was borne out of the council’s Recovery Programme in 2021. Comprising a comprehensive Business Recovery Programme of business support activities designed by the Council. The ES programme directly emanated from the category ‘one-to-one tailored support and advice’. Nevertheless, the recognition of the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritised community businesses called for a different lens in engagement and support. More so, armed with existing intelligence business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority ethnic backgrounds face many challenges in their enterprise journey and navigating market opportunities in the UK. The council recognised these challenges were exacerbated by the pandemic, which posed further risks to entrepreneurial growth for leaders from BAM communities.

For a council whose vision is for a more equal future. In addition, one that recognises the unique barriers that BAME organisations face. Coupled with their intention to tackle the inequality of the two ‘Islington’s’. Invariably, to build community wealth, that is, a shared prosperity which is locally rooted and resilient through partnerships working with community providers and others. This led to the ground-breaking first partnership opportunity with Action for Race Equality (ARE) to bring the cultural lens and tailored business support and advice to meet the needs of BAM-led businesses in the borough. Additionally, a range of themed masterclasses and peer support sessions are informed by the analytical results of the pre-support diagnostics conducted by the author.

The programme objectives are:

To support them to keep their businesses running.

To equip them to strategically navigate market opportunities.

The project aimed to support 10 Black, Asian and Minority-owned businesses in Islington. A non-probability sampling (a combination of purposive and snowball) was employed to recruit participants. 12 local businesses were successfully recruited onto the programme. An initial 6-month contract from October 2021 to March 2022 was agreed upon to provide intensive and highly personalised support. However, similar to project one above, an extension was granted as rich data on business needs emerged

including the need for longer support for sustainable impact. The project successfully continued till November 2022.

1.1.4 Project Three: Inclusive Entrepreneurship (IE) Programme

A Southeast England-based project to provide ‘blended’ support to early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly those from BAME backgrounds. As well as female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs with disability to help address disproportionate and significant barriers to success, including difficulty securing finance from banks and finding it harder to access business support. By providing tailored support to access grants (seed funding) to kick start their ideas and business support to grow and sustain their businesses and create local employment.

The council recognises the challenges that early-stage businesses encounter, particularly those owned by people from BAME backgrounds. Specifically in accessing grants to support their initiative and tailored business support to meet their needs. Additionally, it is widely recognised in the UK that businesses run by Black entrepreneurs are almost twice as likely not to make a profit as those run by White entrepreneurs. Hence, the development of a new business support programme aimed at facilitating inclusive entrepreneurship in the borough.

The Council’s vision is for a more equal future for the people of Islington, and they recognise the unique barriers that BAME organisations face. By reviewing and recognising new approaches to service delivery for local people and businesses, it partnered with ARE to develop a new business support programme. Under the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme. One of which is inclusive entrepreneurialism to support Black and Minority-owned business start-ups.

The project aimed to support 15 businesses. However, successfully recruited 17 eligible participants. That is at least 51% Black Asian mixed heritage owned, not in receipt of other grants from the council. In addition, businesses with a strong start-up idea either have not yet started or have been trading for less than 24 months and are committed to working with consultants for the duration of the programme. Additionally, data gathered at the application and pre-grant award stages inform themed masterclasses. Along with peer support sessions.

The programme objectives are:

To help the businesses realise their goal.

To help them grow their businesses.

Which in the long term will invariably create jobs for local people.

The programme entailed a culturally tailored approach to Inclusive Entrepreneurship support for these young or fledgling BAME businesses to help them get their business ideas off the ground and grow. Similar to Project Two, it was initially commissioned for six months in January 2022 as intensive and highly personalised support. Equally, it was extended for a further six months as needs emerged and prospects of success loomed.

1.1.5 The Connection of the Projects

All three projects were spurred by the dynamic changes invoked by Covid-19. The realisation of the disproportionate representation of minoritized businesses in the supplier chain or market success. Yet a community that displayed ingenuity during the pandemic to reach and support their local community (Korede et al., 2023). Conversely, a significantly challenging task for the authorities (Olawajaju et al., 2023). Hence, a propellant to the engagement with the ethnic community leaders to enhance community participation in service delivery (Mahmood et al., 2021). Consequentially, a catalyst for the exploration of market access and supplier diversity initiatives and associated enablers.

The connectivity of these unique projects was identified as illustrated in Figure 01 below. Specifically, as the capacity building of Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises (MEMSEs) into market access and sustainable growth through the model of asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration between the community (MEMSEs) and the authority (commissioners). This uniquely connects the three projects to promote and facilitate productive, relatable, and meaningful engagement and resultant outcomes, namely organisational development and better access to opportunities for sustainable growth of the entity (MEMSEs).

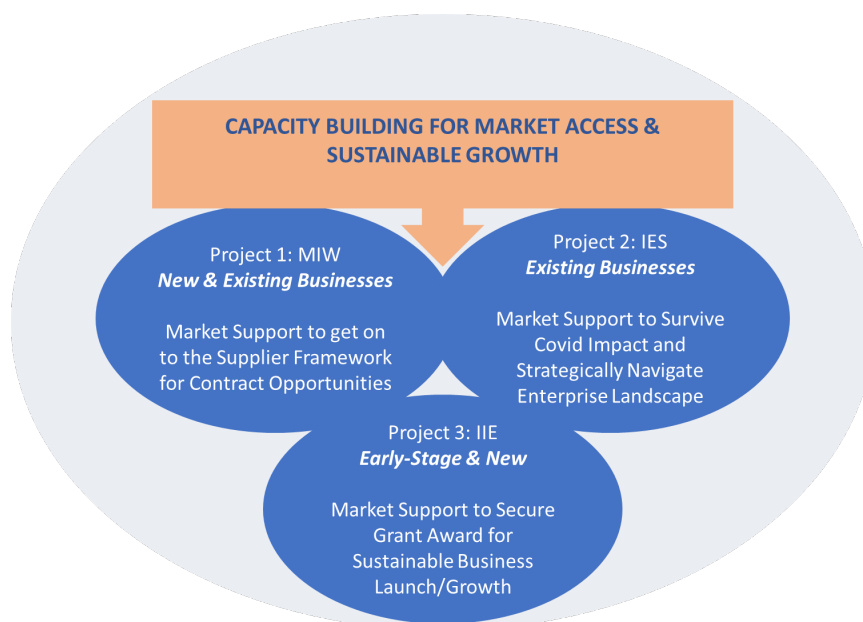


Figure 01: The connectivity framework of the three projects. *Developed by the author.*

1.2. The Knowledge Approach

The knowledge gained from the extant literature criticality combined with the learning from the three projects contributes new knowledge to the field.

The systematic review of extant literature leads the author to set forth a layered conceptual framework to demonstrate the approaches to facilitate engagement and support for equitable market access of the study phenomenon in grants and commissioned services (i.e., the what), the impact of these approaches on the growth and sustainability (i.e., the how), and the strategic importance for the commissioner of services (i.e., the why). Ultimately, the impact of the study in practice.

The Black, Asian Minority Ethnic-led businesses. Despite government initiatives over many decades, studies revealed that ethnic minority businesses continued to face significant challenges to economic participation and needed tailored support in their ventures (Victor Hausner & Associates, 1993), (B. Robson, M. Bradford, I. Deas, 1994), (A. Fadahunsi, D. Smallbone and S. Supri, 2000) (R Owen and D Smallbone, 2003), (Ekwulugo, 2006), (Sonfield, 2014), (LM Shelton & M Minniti, 2018), (K Woldesenbet and I Worthington, 2018), (A Cavalcanti, J Ferreira, 2021), (M Pan, J Hill, I Blount and M Rungtusanatham, 2022), (T Bates, J Farhat and C Casey, 2022).

Conversely, encouraging minority ethnic communities into business has been an implicit feature of the small firm policy agenda in the UK since the 1980s (Ram M. , Published online: 30 Jun 2010). A landscape change began to emerge in early 2000 for these under-represented groups (R Blackburn and M Ram, 2006). With recommendations from researchers due to the profundity of the ineffectiveness of

policy-related initiatives on EMBs (Ram et al., 2008). Calling for a revisit of the revelation of innovative practices (T. Oc and S. Tiesdell, 1999). Including targeted support to enable EMBs' breakout from co-ethnic customs and markets into the mainstream economy (Engelen, 2001), (Basu, 2011). By the end of the decade, it culminated in a call for the re-assessment of supplier diversity of EMBs in mainstream business initiatives (Ram et al., 2010).

Engendering greater ethnic minority involvement in programme design and delivery to foster local ownership of business support projects (Ram et al., 2010, Pan et al., 2022). Associated importance is accorded to EMBs where mainstream support is offered (Nwankwo et al., 2010, Ram et al., 2012). Particularly the awareness of cultural sensitivity (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). As well as the credibility of the practitioners (A Cavalcanti and J Ferreira, 2021).

The call for re-assessment of supplier diversity of EM in mainstream business initiatives is the rationale that underpins the three projects detailed in volume one for the doctoral study. Unexpectedly escalated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government found their reach into communities was undoubtedly defective (T Olarewaju and P Tamvada, 2023). Yet, desperately needed to access and engage these disproportionately socio-economically affected communities (Ofori, 2021). Thus, a state of need provoked openness to the communities and intermediaries (A Kamal, A Hodson and JM Pearce, 2021). Intentionally or not, conversations and interactions are propagated as previously unseen between authorities and communities to achieve a goal (F Mahmood, D Acharya, K Kumar and V Paudyal, 2021). Invariably, a shift and landscape change aroused the interest of researchers in a sector that has been undervalued (Ram M. , 2022). The extended period of the pandemic impacted a longer period of engagement. Further forcing the breakdown of the pre-pandemic systemic barriers. Imposing more dependency on the innovative disposition of EMBS in community support entrepreneurship (T Korede, A Al Mamun, P Lassalle and A Giazitzoglu, 2023). Thus, provoking repeated interactions and catalysing 'relational trust' (Olawajaju et al., 2023, Pan et al., 2022). An approach that is not void of challenges and requires the resource building of the ethnic minority organisations (EMOs) to maximise mutual goal achievement (Pan et al., 2022). The outcomes of the shift to a less stringent, more engaging approach and support for EMOs' market access leads to the doctoral research topic.

'Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and sustainable growth of Minority ethnic-led MSEs.'

To this end and providing a much-needed contextual background, the paper proposes a theoretically grounded model that captures, synthesises and then explains, in essence, the strategic reason for the commissioners of services to seek alternative approaches to the engagement of EMBs in market opportunities (i.e., the why). The study then sets forth a layered conceptual framework to demonstrate the approaches to facilitate engagement and support for equitable market access of the study phenomenon in grants and commissioned services (i.e., the what) and the impact of these approaches on the growth and sustainability of the phenomenon (i.e., the how).

Finally, this layered framework demonstrates the interconnectedness of the relational approach to market engagement and growth sustainability of EMBs. Given the strategic criticality, the author contends that the insights offered provide a valuable theoretical and practical contribution to engaging and commissioning opportunities for EMBs in public contracts, regardless of sector or industry.

1.3. Thesis Structure and Chapter Layout

Complementary to this thesis is volume one of the doctoral study. A portfolio of practitioner-based projects focused on the market access support for Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises (MEMSEs) through the asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration model. To promote and facilitate productive, relatable, and meaningful engagement and resultant outcomes namely organisational development and better access to opportunities for sustainable growth.

Following the introduction to this second volume, **Chapter 2** of the study captures and synthesises extant literature on ethnic minority engagement and business support for market access. The knowledge gained from the critical analysis combined with the learning from the projects contributes new knowledge to the field.

A systematic literature review was applied to the study. This doctoral study is underpinned by the contribution from three projects examined within local authority grant-funded contracts and commissioned services. The ‘asset-based community development’ studies by Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) are examined. The review of the extant literature informed the development of a preliminary conceptual framework for engagement. Particularly, Harrison et al., (2019)’s findings of the ‘asset-based collaborative’ approach as an enhancement of mutual support and collective action to impact positive outcomes are built on. The framework developed and utilised by the author is a fundamental mechanism to provide a grounding for the knowledge uncovered in the three projects. A new conceptual framework is suggested by retrospectively examining the approach in all three projects. Additionally, capacity building as a key feature of the study in

developing the local assets (the EMBs) for market access dictates closer scrutiny of the framework.

The study recognises that significant progress has been made by researchers in exploring knowledge in community capacity development (R Phillips and R H. Pittman, 2015). Through ‘asset-based’ approaches (J Gruidl, B Stout and D Markley, 2015). Equally, there is extensive literature on approaches to ethnic minority business support (Sonfield, 2014). However, it is limited from an ‘equitable’ lens (Shelton et al., 2018; Ram, 2019). Unsurprisingly, this resulted in low take-up and often achieved social objectives rather than economic ones (Parker, 2006). Despite a ‘cultural’ lens in business support delivery through ethnic business associations or ethnic community-based organisations (Monder Ram and Trevor Jones, 2009). This is attributed to the limited potential of public sector measures to boost enterprise amongst under-represented EM groups (Parker, 2006; Blackburn et al., 2006; Shelton et al., 2018; Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Congruent with Ram et al., (2006), who purported the need for a more integrated approach reflective of the interlinked economic and social relationships in which EMBs are rooted. Thus, eliciting the intersectionality requirement to support the diverse EM groups. This phenomenon of ‘ethnic’ diversity can be inferred as synonymous with the collective ‘cultural’ perspective needs of EMBs (S Nwankwo, J Akunuri and N Madichie, 2010). Similarly, the phenomenon of their needs is well documented by researchers as a critical factor if targeted support is to be provided (Ram et al., 2003, Gruidl et al., 2015, Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

The approach to ‘ethnic inclusion’ is further corroborated by a study on barriers and enablers to market access for high-growth and low-growth minority entrepreneurs. Which also examined the links between socio-cultural and educational status (Shelton et al., 2018). Additionally, they shed some light on the equitable system. Congruent with UK-based research that includes a rich focus on personalised targeted support (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Furthermore, Pan et al., (2022) provided a rich insight on minority business growth through relationship building, in market access collaboration. Conversely, cursory on addressing the equitable system (Pan et al., 2022). Additionally, a limited systematic approach to informing sustainability approach to market access. The combined extant knowledge and the grounding provided by Harrison et al., (2019) acted as a feed to the study. The author’s work uniquely brings the knowledge together and has moved it on to answer the research questions:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

Leading the author to set forth a layered conceptual framework to demonstrate the approaches that facilitate engagement and support for equitable market access for the study phenomenon in grants and commissioned services.

Chapter 3 of the study engages in theoretical and practical linkages. Knowing the portfolio PhD structure is a departure from the theoretical PhD, this chapter brings together theoretical and practical linkages of the project-informed framework from Volume One and the extant literature-informed framework from the current volume to aid the identification of critical gaps and strengthens the discussion for the development of a new framework.

Chapter 4 documents the research philosophical and methodological choices utilised in this study. This includes the justification perspective of the chosen approaches and their application. In keeping with the portfolio PhD structure, the research summary is restated to keep the research purpose in focus. A clear documentation of how the projects uniquely happened in different ways, which moved from a disconnected perspective to a connected perspective of circumstances. To this end, the outcome is very inductive and theory emergent. Finally, the limitations and potential challenges associated with the chosen approach are reviewed.

Chapter 5 of this study discusses the findings and contribution to knowledge. It engages the criticality of the theoretical insight gained from the core literature with the practice findings to contribute unique knowledge to the field by uniquely answering the call of the core theories below that underpinned the study. Additionally, the chapter engages the criticality of the practical revelation from the three unique projects with wider literature insight to contribute new concepts to the field.

Harrison et al., (2019) on the best practice model relationship and emergent properties in asset-based community capacity development.

Woldesenbet et al., (2018) call to address the generalizability of the highly customised firm-and-sector-specific business support and its implication in practice and enterprise policy.

Shelton et al., (2018) call to address the generalizability of the approach to preferential procurement programs outside of Los Angeles and to financially lower-ranked firms. Their study included those with turnover from under \$0.5M to \$10M.

Pan et al., (2022) call to address the generalizability of the approach to preferential procurement programs outside of the US. Including conducting qualitative research to gain deep insights into the dynamics of relationships formed through intermediaries.

Chapter 6 of the study documents the conclusion, study limitations, and further research. It details the unique connection that led to the outcomes achieved from the three practitioner-based projects, which invariably informed the new and unique knowledge the doctoral study contributes.

Additionally, the chapter explicates the study limitations and potential areas for future research to advance the knowledge delivered by the doctoral study.

Chapter 7 of the study documents the author's reflection and next step. The author's authentic experience from an academic perspective is shared. Additionally, there is an exciting opportunity for the practical implications of the new knowledge.

1.4. Contribution to Knowledge

Using the portfolio, the author formulates a conceptual and theoretical grounded framework that is portable and can be practically applied across industries and sectors. As depicted in Figure 02 below, it illustrates the best approaches to engagement and capacity support for market access and sustainable growth of MEMSEs. The author concludes that the adoption of the equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach in developing the local assets, the BAM-MSEs, delivers market engagement and sustainable growth.

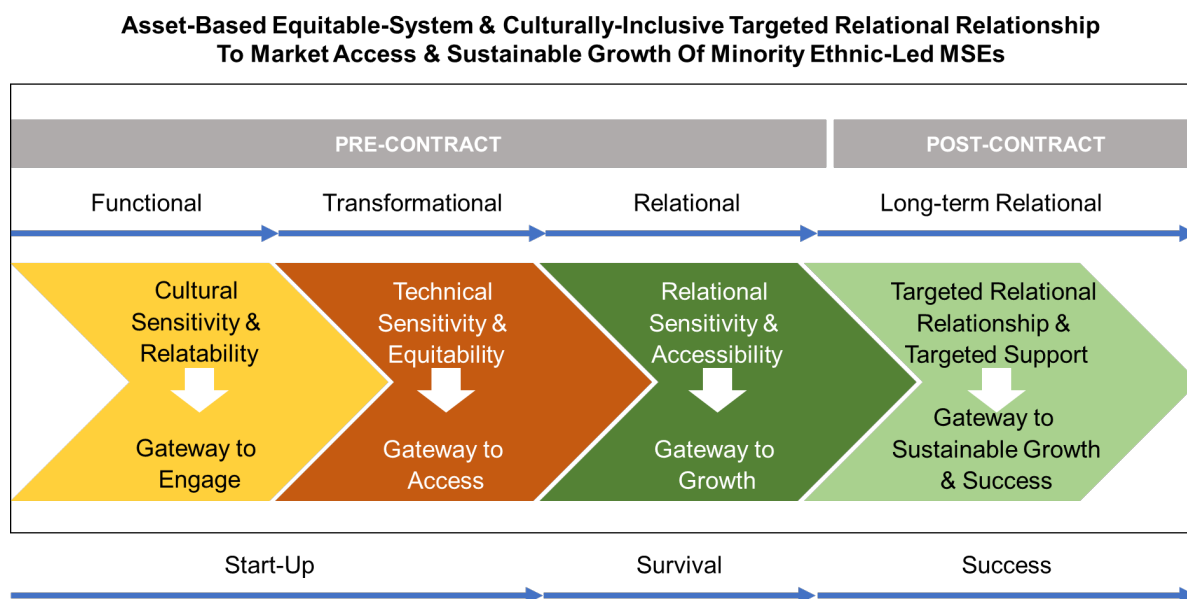


Figure 02: Conceptual & Theoretically Grounded Framework for Market Access & Sustainable Growth of ME-led MSEs. *Developed by the author.*

Chapter Two – The Literature Review

2.1 The Literature Introduction

In this chapter, the author documents the methodological approach employed in the systematic review of 101 peer-reviewed articles. The chapter elucidates the theoretical approaches to market support and access for Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises. While also aiming to uncover the nuanced dyadic factors between the community and commissioners. The epistemological approach is to help reveal and gain key factors about these entities' experience of market support and access, what is known and unknown about their experiences in capacity support and market access engagement.

The knowledge gained about the nature of their characteristics, what defines them, their dialectic connection to entrepreneurship, the motivational origins, the strategic drivers of their survival and socio-economic challenges, particularly in the context of their experiences with market engagement and access to opportunities, will enable a retrospective review of the conceptual framework developed in Volume One. The aim of a retrospective review of the practice-informed conceptual framework is to uncover any knowledge gaps in theory and the construction of a novel theoretical framework. Additionally, the study will keep a reflective view of the COVID-19 pandemic and any consequential inferences. What and how does that look like?

2.2 The Literature Methodology

A range of literature review methodologies are available for the conduct of research. The traditional approach of which, the funnel structure is the most used, includes the jigsaw and chronological structure (L A. Machi and, B T. McEvoy, 2012). The funnel concept broadly follows a three-level process as depicted in Figure 03 below. By narrowing down the review from a wider context for study positioning to a closer research-specific aspect to justify the research question. In contrast, the systematic review depicted in Figure 05 below sets out a highly structured, transparent and reproducible methodology (J Chandler and S Hopewell, 2013). Arguably, the funnel approach is utilisable for more complex literature reviews, particularly in examining a heterogeneous phenomenon (L Mårtensson and G Hensing, 2012). However, the paradigm necessitates the application of a four-level process as depicted in Figure 04 below (P Berthon, A Nairn and A Money, 2003).

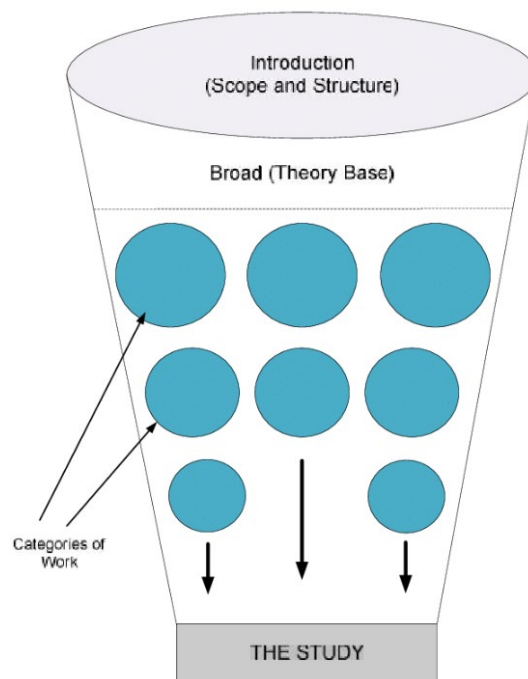


Figure 03: 3-level funnel structure literature review adapted from Hofstee (2006, p. 96)

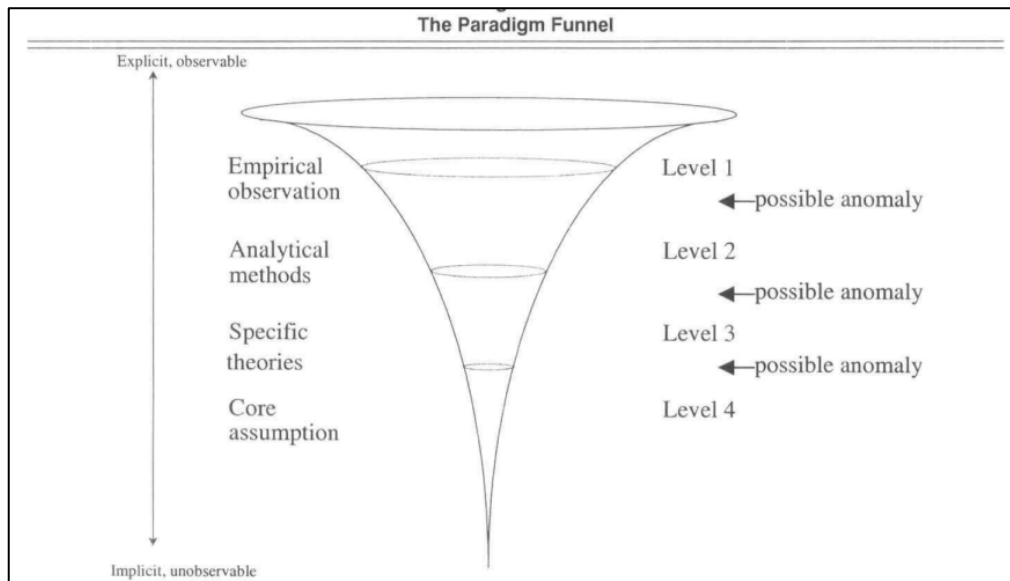


Figure 04: 4-level paradigm funnel structure (P Berthon, A Nairn and A Money, 2003).

Conversely, the systematic review is a better fit for this doctoral study. The approach involves collating all the empirical research that fits prior specification criteria to answer a research question (J Chandler and S Hopewell, 2013). It employs explicit, systematic methods to give clarity on the scope of the review and which studies are eligible for inclusion. Thus, ensuring that selection minimises bias. Invariably, enabling the reliability of findings to draw conclusions in an impartial and objective manner from all the identified papers (R Voola, C Bandyopadhyay, A Voola and S Ray, 2022); (J Chandler and S Hopewell, 2013); (A Oxman and G Guyatt, 1993); (E Antman, J Lau, B Kupelnick, F Mosteller and T Chalmers, 1992).

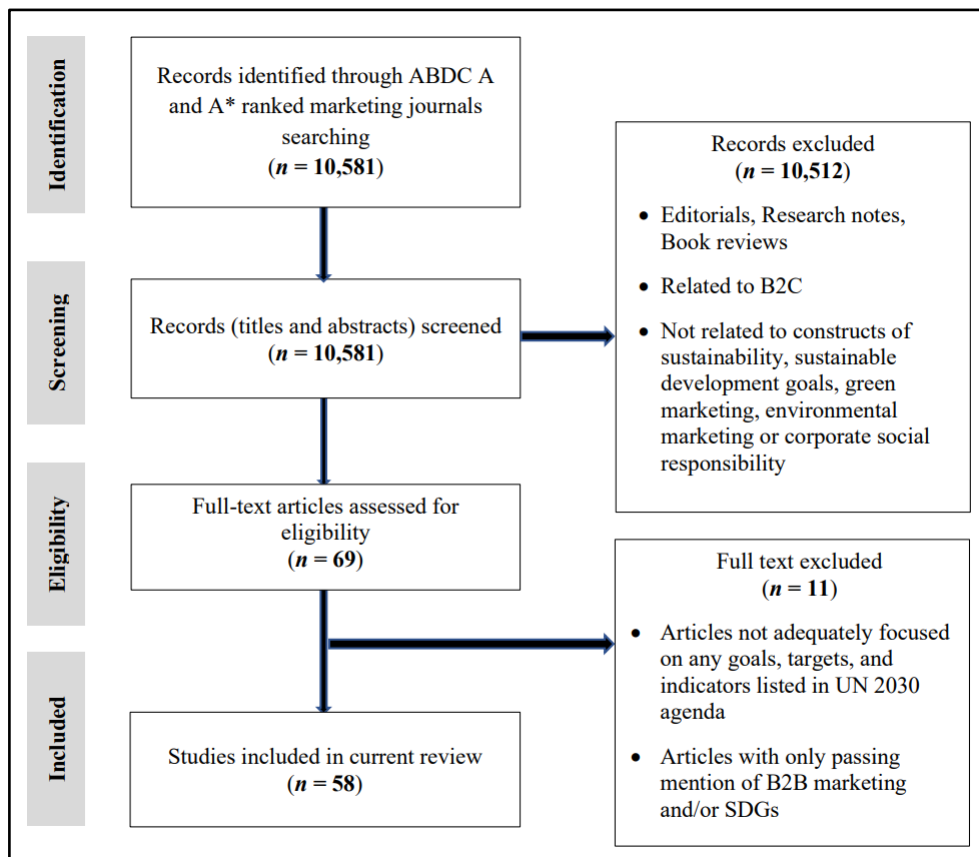


Figure 05: PRISMA flow diagram of a systematic literature review (R Voola, C Bandyopadhyay, A Voola and S Ray, 2022)

Adopting the systematic and comprehensive literature review, the study investigated gaps, including identified areas necessitating further research using the following databases: Connected Papers, Google Scholar, Web of Science and FINDit. This informed the literature streams for the research topic.

2.3 The Literature Selection Framework

Literature review as asserted by Charles Tilly, permits the explanation of the phenomenon under study (Tilly, 2002). Additionally, the Cochrane Collaboration, inspired by the work of the British epidemiologist and a pioneer of evidence-based medicine, has, over the last two decades, made a huge contribution to the systematic literature review model. Describing it as a rigorous approach to organising critical summary (J Chandler and S Hopewell, 2013). Further determined as a critical first step in conducting research to understand the notion of the state-of-the-art. Unearthing the

research gaps and challenges in the study field (A Carrera-Rivera, W Ochoa, F Larrinaga and G Lasa, 2022).

Thus, a systematic literature review was applied to the study. A review of the scope of engagement and support that BAM-MSEs businesses had been exposed to, how the experience might have impacted their market accessibility and what strategies researchers suggest are required to enable sustainable growth. The approach aids the compilation of published research papers on a topic, maps out different research sources, and critically examines these sources (Whitfield, 2016). Purported as an efficient and reliable approach to identifying and evaluating a substantial literature volume that is widely used in business research (Verma and Gusafssonb, 2020). Creating an advantage that allows for capturing all existing studies on the topic, including mono-methods e.g. (quantitative and qualitative) and mixed-method studies (Verma et al., 2020). Further echoed by several researchers that it enables the identification of the epistemological state of theories, special entities, and fields of study (Skarpelis, 2020); (Steup, 2017); (N Jahan, S Naveed, M Zeshan and M A Tahir, 2016); (Rousseau, Manning and Denyer, 2008); (Sinclair, 1998).

The obtainable research studies were collected, identified, and critically analysed by the author (Carrera-Rivera et al., 2022). A framework for literature selection and exclusion-inclusion criteria was duly applied (Jahan et al., 2016, García-Peñalvoa et al., 2022, Lasseson et al., 2023). The systematic review framework for the literature data processing is depicted in Figure 6 below. The summarised analytical construct of the extant literature that informed the emerging themes is detailed in Appendices 1 to 3. This led to a combined visual representation of the data processing of the final selected peer-reviewed articles as depicted in Figure 7 below. Consequentially, the emerging themes informed the construction of the preliminary theoretical framework in Figure 8 and literature frameworks in Figures 9, 10 and 11 below.

Articles, conference papers, data sets, and early-access publications were searched using keywords that yielded 412 articles. Abstracts, reference lists, and table of contents of the papers were reviewed for a more detailed evaluation. The inclusion criteria were applied to the selected articles. Only peer-reviewed publications in English were retrieved. The study area of business support and market access for ethnic minority businesses resulted in 101 articles. Further processing was conducted in Mendeley to exclude duplicates. Furthermore, keyword search string as additional exclusion criteria resulted in a final sample of 67 articles. The framework of the literature selection process is depicted in Figure 6 below. Five topics were identified and explained in the section below, eliciting the quality and relevance of the articles.

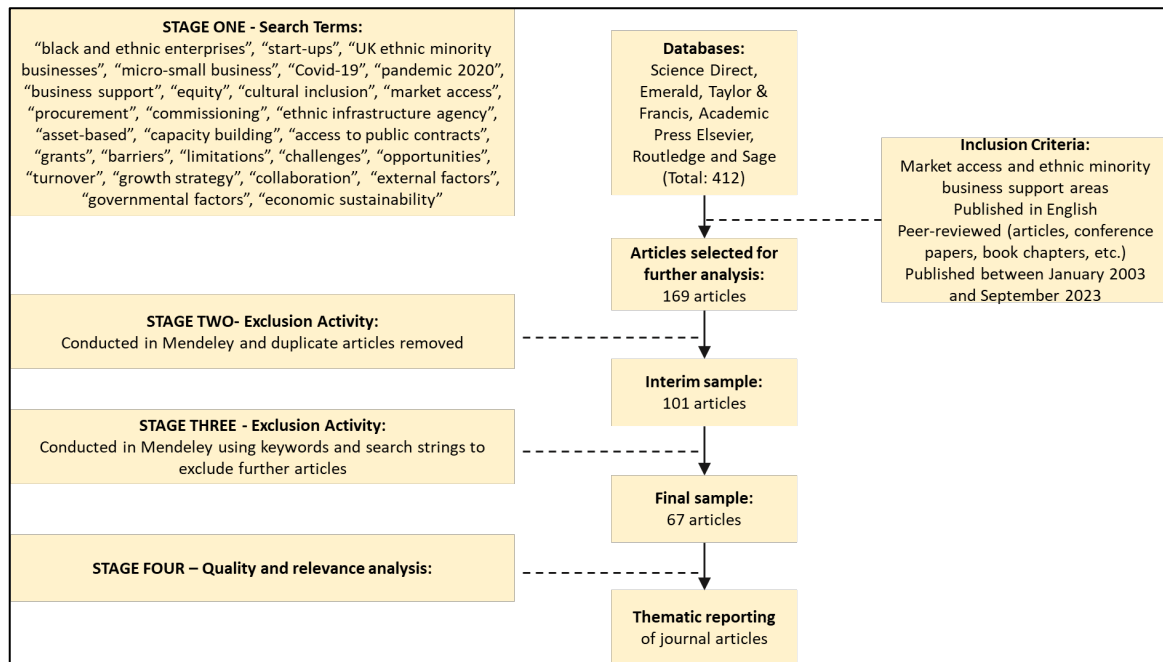


Figure 06: Framework for Literature Selection and Exclusion-Inclusion Criteria

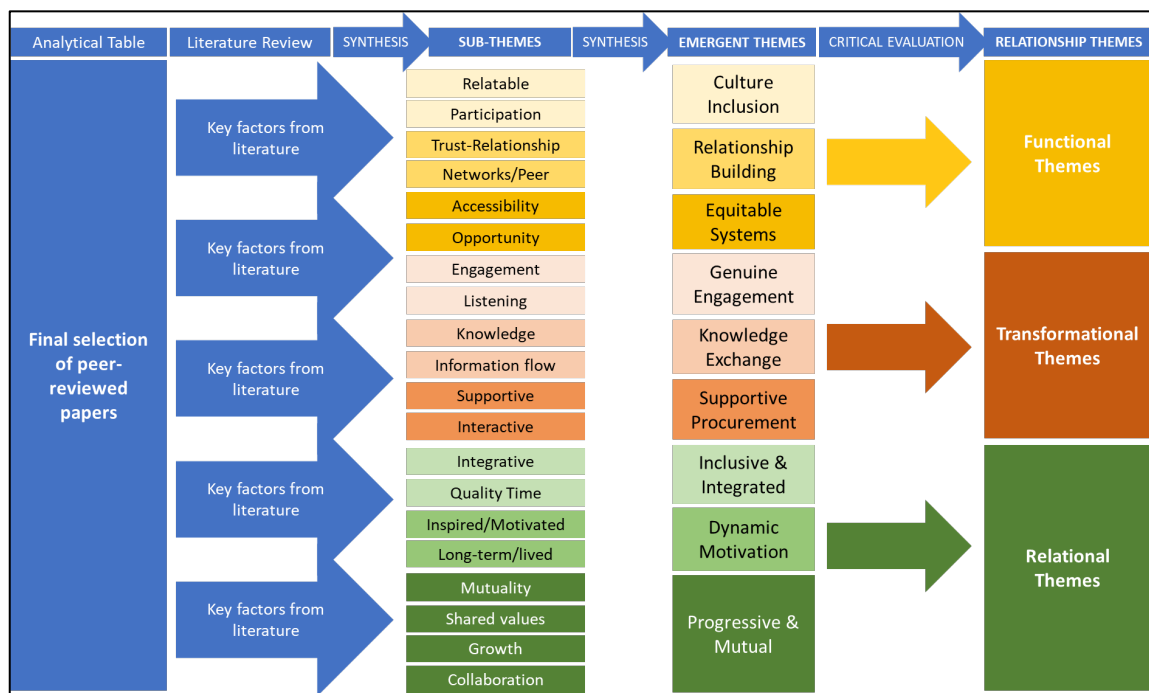


Figure 07: Combined visual representation of data processing of extant literature and emerging themes.

This informed the literature streams for the research aim. Five key topics were identified for knowledge contribution related to this research. In keeping with a systematic review, the author categorised the literature streams into two sections. Namely, 'community businesses' and 'commissionable businesses'. Each category is sub-sectioned as detailed below.

Firstly, for the category ‘community businesses’ all retrievals were peer-reviewed papers and in English. It covered the period of 2003 to 2023 to enable an extensive search of the literature to gain insight into the notion of EMBs and what is known about them as explicated in section 2.4.1 below. Their involvement in the delivery of local or community services (asset-based notion) is explicated in section 2.4.2 below and underpinned by 3 main bodies of literature in Asset-Based Community Development studies (Pretorius et al., 2012, Bruurseman, 2015 and Harrison et al., 2019).

Secondly, the category ‘commissionable businesses’ utilised peer-reviewed papers in English covering the period of 2017 to 2023 to generate the most current research knowledge into EMBs’ experience in accessing business support and capacity building (2.4.3); their experience in accessing public contracts or commissioned services (2.4.4); the approach to growth and sustainability (2.4.5). Underpinned by UK-based studies on preferential procurement initiatives (Woldesenbet & Worthington, 2018); and US-based studies (Shelton & Minniti, 2018 and Pan et al, 2022).

2.4 The Literature Streams

In this section, the streams applied to sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.2 uncover knowledge of ethnic minority businesses as community businesses. While sections 2.4.3 to 2.4.5 uncover knowledge of the entity as commissionable businesses.

2.4.1 Overview of the EMB-MSEs

This section of the study examines ethnic minority businesses and what is known about them: who they are, what drives them, their contributions, their access to social capital (internal and external networks), education, turnover, limitations, market experiences, collective cultural needs, and more.

According to Down (2010), the term ‘enterprise’ denotes businesses (individuals or organisations). Characterised by factors of size, resources, orientation to actively doing things and output (O K Osunsan, J Nowak, E Mabonga, S Pule, A R Kibirige and J B Baliruno, 2015), (Down, 2010). With assumed variations depending on the country and industry (Khatuna, 2014). Similarly, the term ‘entrepreneur’ can denote a small business owner like a corner shop to a high-growth business wizard like Bill Gates (Gruidl et al., 2014). In the UK, Micro-Small Enterprises (MSEs) represent businesses with employees of nine and under (micro) and 10 to 49 employees (small) (Business Population Estimates, 2020). MSEs account for 96% of all businesses in the UK (BEIS, Business Population Estimates, 2020). The interchange of the terms

business owner and entrepreneur is stated by Markley et al., (2005) as often associated with profit-making or non-profit making. The two most categorised as 'business entrepreneur' and 'social entrepreneur' (Gruidl et al., 2014). For the purposes of this study, MSE refers to both categories of profit-making and charitable businesses. Within the context of minority ethnic-led businesses.

As in many countries across the globe, a fundamental part of the United Kingdom (UK) economy is the ethnic minority businesses (Dhaliwal, 2008). Known for their employment creation and their influential role in the competitiveness of the local community and social well-being (Dheer, 2018, Manzoor et al., 2019). Acclaimed as a contributor amongst others in global societies to economic changes through entrepreneurial activities (Ma et al., 2013, Gruidl et al., 2014). Conversely, discouraged in some societies by governmental systems (Hossain et al., 2022).

To set the context of the phenomenon of 'ethnic minority' or ethnic group', there is no one consensus among researchers on the definition (K Deaux and M Verkuyten, 2014). Due to differences in perceiving content and scope as causation of non-agreement across and within disciplines (Gil-White, 2005), (Banton, 2007). Consequentially, results of numerous studies have indicated varied participants' definitions yet frequently related to "shared history", "religion", "language", "common culture", "customs and traditions" (E Shiraev and D Levy, 2004), (K Deaux and M Verkuyten, 2014) (V Benet-Martínez and Y Y Hong, 2014), (M Bobowik, B Martinovic, N Basabe, L Barsties and G Wachter, 2017). Others to "territory", "nation", or "race" (Vermeulen, 2015), (MF Peterson, M Søndergaard and A Kara, 2018). Creating much confusion (Shiraev et al., 2004).

Unsurprisingly and congruent with Shiraev et al., (2004), amongst other researchers who purported that human groups are transient due to constant movement (ML Burton, E Greenberger and C Hayward, 2005). They, furthermore, articulated the liberty of cultural and ethnic self-identify and choices as contributors to variation. Thus, the phenomena of 'ethnic' is becoming increasingly dynamic based on individual interests, ideas and choices. However, the results were different in a more recent cross-sectional study of 273 American, British, Mexican, and Polish students. Katarzyna (2020) purported that the consensus for the US, UK and Mexico was more of a "subgroup" within a nation (K Hamer, S McFarland, B Czarnecka, A Golińska, LM Cadena and L Magdalena, 2020). A relatable definition to this doctoral study.

For the purpose of this study, ethnic minority groups, to a greater extent, refer to the Black (4.2%) and Asian (9.6%) communities representing 14% of the UK population. To a lesser extent people of mixed or multiple ethnic groups (3%). With black people three times and other ethnic groups twice more likely to run a business. While ethnic

minority business (EMB) refers predominantly to micro and small businesses. According to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (2022), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 99.9% of the business population as of the start of 2022. Of this, 99.2% are micro-and-small-sized enterprises (MSES) representing businesses that employ zero to 49 employees. Congruent and purported as typically small EMBs (Barrett et al., 2001, Ram et al., 2008). Competing in saturated spatial markets and concentrated in economically vulnerable sectors (Ram et al., 2006, Dana et al., 2007). Despite this assertion, the ethnic minority group and their diverse ethnic businesses are integral players and significant contributors to the competitiveness of the local economy and community development (Dhaliwal, 2008, Gruidl et al., 2014).

Paradoxically, their significance and entrepreneurship deliver inequitable returns. Studies show that minority ethnic-led businesses' median productivity is less than two-thirds of their white counterparts (Pan et al., 2022). A median turnover of just £25,000, compared to £35,000 for white businesses. Despite the rate of entrepreneurship being around twice that of the white population. The success rates of minority ethnic-led businesses are reported as also lower compared to those of their White counterparts Bates et al., (2018). The report further posits that 30% of black businesses, compared to 54% of white counterparts, expressed they met their financial aims in 2021. Only half (49%), compared to 70% of Whites, met their non-financial aims. Additionally, 28%, compared to 16% of white business owners, reported they failed to make a profit (Bates et al., 2018). Often attributed to higher barriers to business growth including limited access to external financial support (F Neville, JK Forrester, J O'Toole and A Riding, 2018). As well as limited access to mainstream procurement opportunities (Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Furthermore, a lack of relationships with large purchasing institutions (DE Armanios, CE Eesley, J Li and KM Eisenhardt, 2017), (Pan et al., 2022).

The reported experience begs the question of why ethnic minority people venture into business. An area of great interest that has been widely researched (C Duan, B Kotey and K Sandhu, 2021), (Hossain et al., 2022). Insight into discrimination in both labour and capital markets has been well discussed (Blanchard et al., 2008, Basu, 2009, Ibrahim et al., 2011, Pan et al., 2022). The motivation to succeed in the pursuit of employment is truncated by discriminatory practices. Including lack of paid employment, offers of low-paid jobs and lack of progression opportunities (Clark, 2015). Admittedly, to varying degrees subject to their social and educational status (Shelton et al., 2018).

Thus, culminating in the 'push' and 'pull' factors (P van der Zwan, R Thurik, I Verheul and J Hessels, 2016), (Duan et al., 2021). The restriction to the labour market and inadequate skills impose a 'push' away from employment. Purported as a disadvantage model (Basu, 2009). Orienting the vision, motivation, opportunity recognition and risk-overt attitudes as 'pull' factors toward entrepreneurial opportunities (Duan et al., 2021 (2021), Martinez-Cañas et al., 2023). Conversely, van der Zwan et al., (2016) posit that both 'push' and 'pull' factors are motivators to an enterprise. With 'push' driven by personal factors and 'pull' driven by external factors.

Notwithstanding, a survival construct is engaged. Anchored in the cultural and social norms of their ethnic backgrounds (Ram et al., 2003). Drawing on and transforming their intrinsic skills, values and aspirations for achievement into business activities (G Singh and A DeNoble, 2003). To meet the needs of their immediate and ethnic communities within a specific market (Piperopoulos, 2010). A market constraint that arouses cognizance of limitations to external support and uncertainties due to racial biases, skills, knowledge and experience (Hossain et al., 2022). Invariably, dictating entry into a low capital investment smaller business size of low competition to larger businesses (Hossain et al., 2022). Explicating the challenges faced by EM small businesses, not just in labour market exclusion but also in the capital market.

Challenges that necessitated an endogenous approach to support (M T M Sithas and H A K N Surangi, 2021). Drawing on their cultural ethos of hard work, economic well-being, risk-overtness, loyalty, solidarity, social values and more (G Ibrahim and V Galt, 2011), (X Wang and SA Maani, 2014) . Sithas et al., (2021) posit the backbone of these ethnic businesses is their strong social network with the family, relations and community. Building social capital in skills, knowledge, resources, and more through the formation of a close supportive network. A propellant for more venture creation (Sithas et al., 2021). Congruent with reported data that black people are three times and other ethnic groups twice more likely to run a business (T Bates, WD Bradford and R Seamans, 2018), (W Lam, P Harris and S Yang, 2019). Arguably, reported to have the propensity to increase with the projected ethnic population rise over the coming decades (J Vespa, L Medina and D Armstrong, 2020).

Further, strengthening the social capital of this community of practice (M D Matsaganis and V S Katz, 2014). A collective cultural connection across diverse ethnic groups by means of shared concerns, common problems and discriminatory experiences (Verkuyten, 2018). Promulgating a unified community to fulfil both individual and group goals. Increasing transfer and sharing of knowledge (S Ansari, K Munir and T Gregg, 2012). To build each other and more enterprises (Pan et al., 2022). Demonstrating

their ingenuity and deep expanding roots in local communities, as seen during the Covid-19 pandemic. A catalyst to the government's approach to access community groups, particularly ethnic minorities, through their social networks. To circumvent the distrust between political power and community and aid the COVID-19 vaccination and information resource mobilisation (Kamal et al., 2021).

A springboard to re-assessment of institutions' engagement and support strategies of ethnic minority businesses as the expansion of these entities grew during the pandemic (Korede et al., 2023). Serving as lifelines to many vulnerable community members and groups (R Septanta, A S Latif, C S Ramdani, R Arslan and Y Urhasan, 2022). They further purported that EMBs pivoted into new areas of services to provide essentials to community members. This led to generating opportunities for those previously under-utilised in the community, which led to the notion of EMBs and the 'asset-based' concept, as explicated in the next section.

2.4.2 EMBs and the Asset-Based Notion

The ABCD approach to community development was pioneered in the 1990s (J Kretzmann and J P. McKnight, 1996). According to researchers, 'asset' in community development has been denoted as 'strength' of individuals and communities (J Foot and T Hopkins, 2010), (C Blickem, S Dawson, S Kirk, I Vassilev, A Mathieson, R Harrison and P Bower, 2018). It is further expounded as the existing resources, strengths, and capabilities within a community that can be leveraged for its development and improvement (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003), (Russell, 2021).

Pretorious & Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) asset-based community development (ABCD) papers provided preliminary grounding to the thesis to understand the notion of these businesses as local assets and highlight the importance of utilising local assets as key resources in tackling socio-economic inequalities. The studies purport a trust-based participatory relationship-driven approach to ABCD and its utilisation to support marginalised and/or disadvantaged community members to drive the future of their own development and move away from the model of dependency. Therefore, insights from the 3 main papers will help uncover the range of approaches in asset-based community capacity development to provide broader preliminary answers to research question one (R1) below. However, the approach has been critiqued as lacking sufficient high-quality evidence of effective sustainability in practice (M.A. MacLeod and A. Emejulu, 2014). Additionally, purported to lack the broader systemic issues that contribute to community challenges (R Fisher

and J DeFilippis, 2015). Consequentially, there are limitations in ABCD contributions to R1, which the thesis practice insights will contribute through increased knowledge of the systemic issues gained across the 3 practice-based projects study phenomenon and the barriers and enablers to redressing them. Uniquely, the thesis will address the gap identified by the closest paper (Harrison et al., 2019), specifically the lack of the best practice relationship model and emergent factors in the asset-based collaborative approach. By exploring the approaches to the best practice model and the emergent properties of relationship building in asset-based collaboration. Invariably to uncover the nuanced dyadic relationship factors in market access capacity-building and the economic sustainability of the study phenomenon.

R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access of Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded an unprecedented wave of void in the government's accessibility to communities (OlaREWaju et al., 2023). In particular, the ethnic minority communities (Mahmood et al., 2021). Leading to a pandemic-enforced non-stringent process and need-led engagement of these local community. This paved the way for increased emergent support groups (Harris, 2021). And business innovation and development (M Lounsbury, J Cornelissen, N Granqvist and S Grodal, 2019), (P Lassalle and JM Scott, 2018). Reinforced by the support of ethnic-led intermediary community organisations acting as the bridge between the community and commissioners (Mahmood et al., 2021). Invariably fostering an appetite for dialogue and conversations on mechanisms of change previously cursory (Macmillan, 2020a). The local assets and the authorities are pulled together to envision a common goal (Gruidl et al., 2014). To explore better ways of engagement and market support to enable improved services to the local people. An approach purported by Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) as ABCD.

Despite several extant studies have associated ABCD application with community health improvement (Blickem et al., 2018), (R Noble-Jones, S Jamieson and B Fitzpatrick, 2019). Yet, several studies have also related it to socioeconomic improvement (Pretorius et al., 2012, Gruidl et al., 2014, Bruursema, 2015). However, Harrison et al., (2019) have connected both describing social and economic inequality as determinants of communities' health development to facilitate sustainable change in the cooperation between the community and the authorities (Harrison et al., 2019).

The asset-based approach to community development described by Pretorius and Nel (2012), unlike the problem-based approach described by Brueggemann, (2006)

focuses on the strength of the community to build its capacity. Congruent with Bruursema (2015) as an approach to raising social capital. Not unitarily but in conjunction with challenging the existing power structure (Bruursema, 2015). Further purported by Harrison et al., (2019) as a facilitator of change within disadvantaged populations. Populations or citizens that are often connected by a shared sense of identity and past experiences (Bruursema 2015). Having been bereft of external social values, they, keenly recognise their individual community skills as of equal value. Promulgating the development of relationships and social capital as a result of shared life experiences (Harrison et al., 2019). Therefore, employing the simple social thinking methodology to engage citizens naturally (Pretorius et al., 2012).

Unlike conventional rational problem-solving which is complex (Brueggemann, 2006). Further described by Brueggeman (2006) as a cyclical process applicable to the problem-based approach. Contrary to social thinking, which augments multiple thinking strategies through collective effort, interdependence, partnership and empowerment rooted in practice (Pretorius et al., 2012, Harrison et al., 2019).

However, research shows problem-based approach can deliver improved services and facilities (Nel, 2014). Conversely, postulated as limited service improvements and sustainability (E. Pretorius and H. Nel, 2012). Congruent and further critiqued by other researchers for its functional sustainability (C Russell and T Smeaton, 2010), (Saleebey, 2009). Attributed to its limited structural changes to influence policy on resources, capacities and capabilities of people and organisations (Brueggemann, 2006). Congruently characterised as unreliable change sustainability due to a community dependency reinforcement (Pretorius et al., 2012, Bruursema, 2015, Harrison et al., 2019).

Arguably, explicated by the definition of change-driven community development by numerous researchers (Gruidl et al., 2014, Phillips et al., 2015). Asserted by these studies as a multi-faceted system in community capacity development. To effect institutional structural change and economic and community improvements. Augmenting connectivity and reciprocity between the two structures (Harrison et al., 2019). Reinforcing it as a partnership between the communities and authorities (Pretorius et al., 2012, Harrison et al., 2019). Not devoid of trust-building in the collaborative vision (Pretorius et al., 2012, Bruursema, 2015). More so effective and deepened into trust-worthy relationships where there are observable environmental and institutional changes (Harrison et al., 2019). Axiomatically beneficial to the communities when delivered with the intersectionality of social, economic and community cultural aspects (Pretorius et al., 2012).

Gilchrist (2004) describes it as a model of meeting community aspirations, particularly for those with inaccessibility or limitation to adequate services. In addition to exclusion from opportunities and decision-making (Gilchrist, 2004). Similar to Pretorius and Nel (2012) who posit it as a people-centred dialogical and collective decision-making process. Further purported by Bruursema (2015) as a genuine participatory strategy employed to tackle structural causes of deprivation. Congruent with Gilchrist et al., (2016) as a relationship enhancement between communities and authorities to influence service design decision-making. Additionally, Harrison et al., (2019) describe it as a socially sustainable model to support disadvantaged communities to build human capabilities.

Overall, from the critical review of the extant literature, there is consensus on the benefits of an asset-based approach to the capacity development of the community. In particular, significant knowledge has been gained from the studies of Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) to provide grounding for the rest of the literature streams.

In essence, Pretorius and Nel (2012) purport that the process builds on recognised internal strengths. Driven by the relationship building between community and institutions. With composite factors such as respect and embracing of community-rooted tradition. To promote sustainable growth. However, they perceive the relationship-driven element to require continuous facilitation of connection between community and institutions. This highlights a critical gap in the sustainability of change without long-term community engagement, which has implications. Perhaps elucidating Bruursema's (2015) argument of the higher cost and time investment compared to the needs-based approach. A potential deterrent to the strategy adoption, particularly in light of the global and local economic challenges since Covid-19. Mitigatingly argued by Pretorius and Nel (2012) as positively impacting long-term financial and service quality delivery outcomes. Consequentially, a trade-off to the low-cost maintenance and survival needs-based.

However, Bruursema (2015) recommends further studies into the best practice model of asset-based community capacity building. Nonetheless, it concurs with Pretorius and Nel (2012) on the impact of asset-based when complemented with participatory frameworks. An enabler to raising social capital within the community and between the community and funders. Initiating a power shift from institutional structures as communities are recognised and encouraged in their contribution. Invariably engendering a more self-sustaining and resourceful community (E. Pretorius and H. Nel, 2012), (Bruursema, 2015). Congruent with Harrison et al., (2019) that asset-based could facilitate a redefining of communities.

Harrison et al., (2019) further postulated that the asset-based community development approach is a resource optimiser to mitigate austerity. Affording governmental institutions, the utilisation of the available resources to empower the community and leverage their strengths and expertise to deliver positive outcomes. Driving trust-based relationship-building and social capital as the communities begin to see themselves as talented, skilful contributors, etc. Congruent with the other two studies, they assert that the model is relationship-driven. Despite the assertion, they suggest further examination is required for the lack of consistency in how communities articulate and develop their capabilities (Harrison et al., 2019).

However, recognisably, it is a model that provokes a power dynamic shift from accountability-led actions to objectives-led actions (Harrison et al., 2019). Engendering participation, community profile (cultural) inclusion, reciprocity and social capital development. Acclaimed by Harrison et al., (2019) as dependent on establishing links, which may necessitate navigating around. As supported by Pretorius and Nel's (2012) perception of continuous facilitation of connection between community and authority by community connectors. Explicating the cost implication (Bruursema, 2015). Moreover, Harrison et al., (2019) suggest further research into the emergent relationship properties of this relationship-driven approach as an inclusive approach.

In conclusion, synthesising the combined literature provides grounding for the preliminary theoretical framework developed by the author for this doctoral research. It highlights the trust-based participatory relationship-driven collaborative approach to support the empowerment and development of marginalised communities. As depicted in Figure 8 below. A fundamental model to uncover knowledge in the three projects. However, there are critical knowledge gaps that the current thesis will extend and contribute to. By exploring the approaches to the best practice model and the emergent properties of relationship building in asset-based collaboration, which is critically lacking, as highlighted by the closest extant study (Harrison et al., 2019). In essence, the study aims to provide new insight into relationship factors for the effective sustainability of ABCD in practice and, consequentially, the market access capacity-building and the economic sustainability of the study phenomenon. Invariably, to uniquely contribute knowledge to the nuanced dyadic factors in community-commissioner relationships to facilitate MEMSEs engagement and market development in non-traditional opportunities.

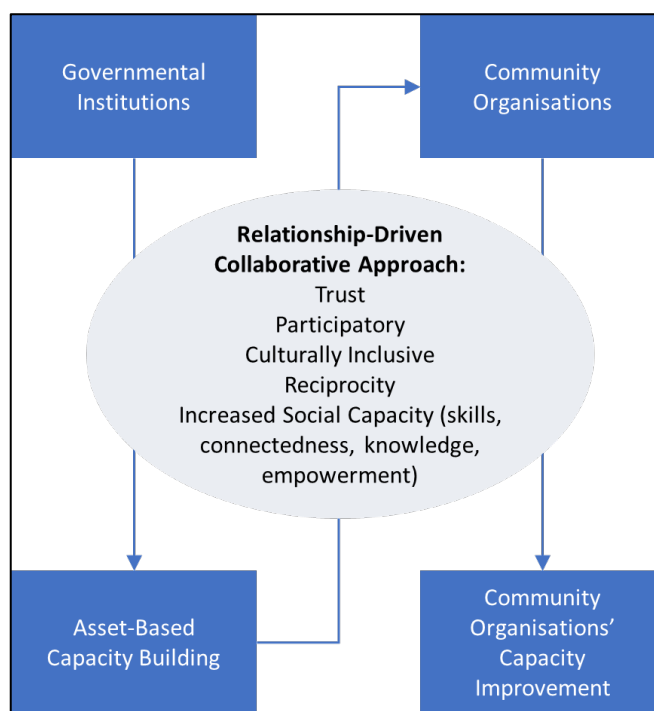


Figure 08: Preliminary theoretical framework for asset-based collaborative approach Developed by the author.

2.4.3 EMBs and Business Support Approaches

This section of the literature review will focus on and uncover existing theoretical knowledge in approaches to capacity support in preparing EMBs for market engagement to answer the first part of research question one (R1a).

R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in

- a) capacity support for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?

Firstly, much insight has been gained from the previous sections about who the EMBs are. Including their strengths, socio-economic activities and contributions to the local community (Sonfield, 2014). Additionally, the revelation of them as an integral and diverse part of the UK economy and society (Gruidl et al., 2014, Sonfield, 2014). Notwithstanding, they encounter many challenges and barriers that negatively impact their potential (Bates et al., 2018, Shelton et al., 2018). Consequentially impacting the wider UK economy (Pan et al., 2022).

Unsurprisingly, the economic limitations have been an area of interest for many researchers in the UK and globally (Korede, 2021, Duan et al., 2021, Pan et al., 2022). Additionally, what support approaches would be beneficial to their economic participation (Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022, Bates et al., 2022).

The UK and global governments' effort to encourage small business entrepreneurship, including minority ethnic enterprises, has been a widely publicised policy agenda for decades. Reported by Ram, (1998) as dating back to the 1980s. Policy agenda developed in cognisance of the challenges these businesses face, and support requirements to engage in economic development (Ram et al., 2003). Progressively influencing the UK government's keen interest in business support policy for black and minority ethnic businesses (Ram et al., 2003, Ram et al., 2012).

Purportedly, even more explicit and advanced in the US (Ram M. , 2019). Congruent with reports by UK researchers several years on (Sonfield, 2014, Woldesenbet et al., 2018). As well as many US researchers (Shelton et al., 2018, Bates et al., 2018, Bates et al., 2022, Pan et al., 2022).

Over the years, several initiatives have been developed in the UK to facilitate business support of EMBs (Ram et al., 2003). Ranging from mainstream business support agencies funded by the government such as Business Links and Regional Development Agencies. Established to provide business support to small businesses, including EMBs in England (Ram et al., 2003; Ram et al., 2012). To other intermediary agencies, including EM-led agencies, following the failings of these mainstream providers to attract EMBs (Sonfield, 2014). Failings are reported as mostly driven by inconsistent and underdeveloped approaches to engaging these entities (Ram et al., 2003).

Conversely, reported positive effects in some communities are attributed to increasing awareness of EMBs' specific needs (Ram et al., 2012, Sonfield, 2014). Promoting the then, 2011 UK Coalition Government to recognise the need for 'tailored action' to raise low entrepreneurial activity of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups including women and service leavers (Ram et al., 2012).

Consequentially, the propensity of EMs in business development increasingly stimulated research curiosity (Sonfield, 2014). Necessitating the examination of the positive effects of business support in some communities to engender tailored assistance by non-governmental organisations (Sonfield, 2014). Correspondingly, an influential factor in the awareness of the specific support needs of the EMBs (Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Ram, 2019, Pan et al., 2022).

According to several researchers, a trust-based relationship establishment is fundamental to the business support engagement of EMBs (Ram, 2019, Hossain et al., 2022, Pan et al., 2022). The absence of such trust in relationships with mainstream business support is a perennial theme. Hossain et al., (2022) posit that trust plays an imperative role for EMBs in seeking external support. Expanded by Pan et al., (2022), that trust has a direct impact on developing a common understanding of mutual commitment and cooperation as a basis for strong relationships. Particularly for a community that has experienced social exclusion (Shelton et al., 2018, Bates et al., 2018). That is, from business support and social networks (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022).

Unsurprisingly, Hossain et al., (2022) purport the creation of information networks to support the needs of EMBs. Concurred by Shelton & Minniti, (2018), who purported increased access to information as a positive approach. To redress the lack of guidance and business opportunities knowledge culminated in distrust of mainstream support (Ram M. , 2019). Congruently, Woldesenbet et al., (2018) posited business support in the relevant information to sensitise them to public procurement opportunities. Whilst also doubling up on building their capacity threshold. This was concurred by De Armanios et al. (2017), who asserted the importance of capability building by intermediary agencies to redress low skills. As well as acting as connectors to buyers.

Ram (2019) purports the utilisation of diverse engagement efforts to gain interactions with the EMB communities. Exemplifying relationship development through trusted community members. Congruent with Shelton & Minniti, (2018) who purported cultural inclusivity as a motivation factor. EMBs may choose to participate in procurement support initiatives because they see others 'who look like them' (Shelton et al., 2018). Elucidating Haq et al., (2021) assertion of co-ethnic relationships increase the natural communication flow and a greater sense of loyalty and friendship. Triggered by shared cultural norms, values, and common languages (Haq et al., 2021, Pan et al., 2022).

According to Ram (2019), business support programmes targeted at minority businesses require contextualisation to meet with needs. The study conducted by Bates (2022), reports three major resources money, market and management skills as vital business success factors. The absence of these creates barriers and has been reported as prevalent in black-owned businesses (Bates, 2022). Money and market access support are congruently reported (Shelton et al., 2018).

Concurred by Pan et al., (2022), who reported training and education in internal management skills and processes designed to improve the long-term viability of EMBs. Congruent with De Armanios et al. (2017) study, which posited extensive

support in management training, networking events, business model assistance, market knowledge, etc. This was further explicated by Woldesenbet et al., (2018), who asserted supportive themed workshops on procurement processes and requirements. Conversely, the time constraints of these resource-limited entities impose additional barriers to their availability for support (Pan et al., 2022).

Hence, a call for well-designed and contextualised support initiatives (Shelton et al., 2018; Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Further asserted that consultancy-supported tendering processes and requirements delivered as tailored, diagnostic, one-to-one sessions as a vehicle to clarify issues of concern (De Armanios et al., 2017). Concurred by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) as customised, tailored, and firm-specific intensive business support. The study further posited 20 hours of personalised 1-to-1 firm-specific intensive business support. In order to build EMBs' online procurement platforms knowledge for searching and identifying of opportunities. Concurred by Shelton et al., (2018) as highlighting a tailored approach with the additionality of cultural inclusion. Further expanded by Hossain et al., (2022) and Pan et al., (2022) studies that EMBs leverage co-ethnic relationships to jointly learn to aid their capacity improvement in the exploitation of business opportunities.

Congruent with Bates et al., (2018), who posited peer mentoring support. Similarly, Pan et al., (2022) posited peer support as a means of information exchange, best practices transfer and mutual learning from other minority businesses. Defined by Ram (2019) as 'Action Learning Sets' fostering self-reflection and re-evaluation of business goals. A peer assistance platform for co-sharing knowledge on dealing with challenges encountered in business opportunities and access to large corporations (Pan et al., 2022). Additionally, their study highlighted the value of role models in sharing success stories and best practices.

In summary, the extant literature explicates a consensus by researchers of the need to adopt a contextualised and personalised business support approach to engage positively and capacity-build EMBs. Underpinned by relationship building to engender trust in a community that has suffered social exclusion (Pan et al., 2022) and knowledge deficit (Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Particularly the development of a customised and tailored sector -and product knowledge-specific approach (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Conversely, extant studies, even though contribute deep insights into capacity-building support and relationship-building as a driver, there is a lack of relationship typology in support and hence a gap in knowledge.

Furthermore, beyond the call for well-designed and tailored support, is cultural inclusion (LM Shelton and M Minniti, 2018). In addition, a programme designed to improve the long-term viability of EMBs by building their internal management skills

and process capabilities to ensure contract readiness (Pan et al., 2022). While also utilising peer assistance to increase their confidence and implicit knowledge (Shelton et al., 2018). Networking for relationship building and community knowledge raising (Pan et al., 2022) and themed workshops on tendering opportunities and requirements (Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

The synthesis of findings from the main extant literature led to the construction of the literature framework by the author for this doctoral study as depicted in Figure 9 below. The detailed thematic analytical table is illustrated in Appendix 1. This framework builds on the preliminary grounding framework developed by the author in Figure 8.

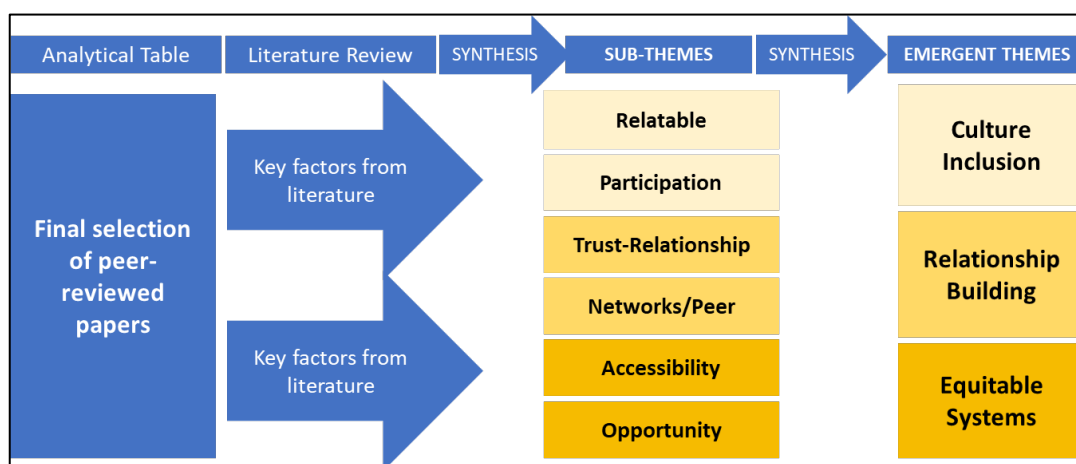


Figure 09: Literature framework for an asset-based culturally-inclusive collaborative approach for capacity support. *Developed by the author.*

The insight gained in this section has helped to uncover existing theoretical knowledge in approaches to capacity support in preparing EMBs for market engagement to answer research question one (R1) below. The themes identified are namely cultural sensitivity, tailored support and relationship building. However, there is a critical gap in the relationship type to capacity support engagement which this thesis will address.

- R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in
 a) capacity support for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?

The next session will build on this to uncover extant knowledge of approaches to market access and participation. To move the research closer to answering the second part of research question one R1b:

- R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in
 b) equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?

2.4.4 EMBs and Public Market Access Approaches

This session of the literature review will focus on and uncover existing theoretical knowledge in procurement engagement approaches of EMBs in public market accessibility and participation. To move the research closer to answering the second part of research question one R1b and research question R2:

- R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in
b) equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
- R2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?

The section above has uncovered the business support approaches to engaging and building the capacity of EMBs. Approaches that recognise the specific needs of these entities are developed in a culturally sensitive way to resonate and engender a platform of trust. This section of the literature review will focus on and uncover the approaches to public contract procurement in engaging EMBs in market opportunities.

Since the 2011 UK Coalition Government, the UK government policy focus on ethnic minority businesses' market access support has received increased importance. To encourage 'breakouts' from the limited co-ethnic trading (Sonfield, 2014, Ram, 2019). Thus aiding black and minority ethnic businesses' economic engagement in public procurement opportunities (Ram et al., 2012, Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

However, unlike the UK, the US procurement programme initiatives are several decades ahead of the UK's procurement support programmes (Ram, 2019), (Bates, 2022). Nevertheless, opening up grant and/or contract opportunities in the public sector for the EMBs' economic inclusion (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022).

Utilising both governmental and non-governmental agencies in programme development and roll-out to provide targeted support to EMBs (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Including active participation in intermediary-sponsored activities (De Armanios et al., 2017). With particular success reported for those ethnically focused and sensitive acting as connectors between the EMBs and the public and business sector buyers (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Effectively enabling EMBs to leverage their minority status by bridging the institutional void (De Armanios

et al., 2017). Resulting in market access at varying degrees subject to the entrepreneur's personal status. Delivering expansion (higher-growth entrepreneurs) for some and viable enterprises (lower-growth entrepreneurs) for others (Shelton et al., 2018).

However, several researchers have reported limited access to mainstream procurement opportunities as a systemic barrier to EMBs' economic prosperity (Shelton et al., 2018, Bates, 2022). Additionally, there is a lack of relationships and connections with large purchasing institutions (Bates et al., 2022, De Armanios et al., 2017). Conversely, according to Pan et al., (2022), insufficient time availability to engage because of resource constraints. Additionally, insufficient productive capacity to compete for large contracts (Bates et al., 2022). However, Hossain et al., (2022), posited discrimination as a factor in their inaccessibility to the product market. Supported by Ram (2019) who asserted endemic racism is an actor of systemic barriers. Elicited by Shelton et al., (2018), who posited some buyers behold EMBs as incapable entrepreneurs and, as such, refuse to provide valuable information.

Congruent with Hossain et al., (2022), explication of cultural barriers as a hindrance to their economic market engagement and invariably exclusion from companies. Consequentially, Shelton et al., (2018) purported sighting people who look like them succeeding as a visibility activator to business and government sectors opportunities. Additionally, expanding the knowledge of EMBs through establishing exchange relationships for opportunities will increase opportunities identification and access. Not surprisingly, Woldesenbet et al., (2018) assertion of the faceless nature of tendering as a barrier to the public sector market. While Ram (2019) elicits severe market competition and punitive regulatory processes as actors of systemic barriers. Congruent with Woldesenbet et al., (2018) who purported that the bureaucratically complex tendering and procurement processes of the public sector institutions account for the inaccessibility of EBs as prospective market suppliers.

Further extended by Bates et al., (2018) as long-standing barriers disproportionately impacting EMBs in comparison to their white counterparts. Caused by insufficient education, skills and experience to exploit market opportunities (Bates et al, 2018). Supported by Ram (2019) who reported the absence of guidance and knowledge of how corporations operate and exclusion from business support networks as additional barriers. Thus, emphasising the systemic sensitivity to the specific circumstances of EMBs in supplier diversity initiatives.

In particular, addressing knowledge deficit through knowledge exchange activities to dissuade co-ethnic market strategy and breakthrough to mainstream markets (Basu A. , 2010). Asserted by De Armanios et al., (2017) as building their knowledge and

skills to ease their path into government funding. Concurred by Woldesenbet (2018), as an enabler to building their human and social capital. Further supported by Shelton et al., (2018) who asserted the approach to government and business procurement opportunities for EMBs through knowledge expansion and increased information access as an engagement tool to facilitate awareness raising of opportunities to serve these customers (Shelton et al., 2018).

Conversely, Woldesenbet et al., (2018), purported that removing systemic barriers by streamlining and simplifying the local authorities and other public sector organisations' public procurement processes is vital. Consequentially encouraging participation by lowering market access barriers (Bates et al., 2022). A root to empowering EMBs to develop their internal systems and processes such as initial protocols and procedures in readiness to supply to mainstream markets (Pan et al., 2022). Expanded by Shelton et al., (2018) as an enabler for EMBs to achieve a critical threshold level. Additionally, adopting lowered systemic barriers enhances their chances of successful assessment for business and government contracts (Shelton et al., 2018).

In summary, the extant literature explicates a consensus by researchers on the need to address systemic barriers and adopt a more equitable system for public procurement opportunities. Including building connections with public procurement buyers through intermediary agencies who know the communities. In order to build trust to encourage the participation of ethnic minority businesses as potential grantees and/or contract suppliers. In addition, Shelton et al., (2018) explicated lowering the entry threshold whilst also increasing access to information and expanding the knowledge of EMBs. Concurred by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) as an enabler of market engagement and access. The lower threshold consequentially asserted as supportive of their chances of successful application assessment (Shelton et al., 2018). Furthermore, Woldesenbet et al., (2018) purported that the inaccessibility of EBs as prospective suppliers in the public sector market was characterised by the bureaucratically complex tendering and procurement processes of the institutions. The redressing of such systemic barriers is posited as necessitating supportive measures such as streamlining and simplifying the public procurement processes. Additionally, Woldesenbet et al., (2018) asserted developing EMBs' human capital to influence their mindset towards positive market engagement. Whilst Pan et al., (2022) posited creating an environment of socialisation that allows minority businesses to demonstrate their values and goals. As asserted by Shelton et al., (2018) as a means of establishing exchange relationships with EMBs for opportunities. Further asserted by Pan et al., (2022) that EMBs' access to the public sector market will engender trust and legitimacy for other market opportunities.

There is a collective consensus on a trust-based relationship model to effectively engage EMBs in market opportunities by developing supportive measures to address their needs. In particular, creating an environment that fosters knowledge exchange to increase their market opportunity awareness. Asserted as a matter of educational gain of significance in the ongoing 21st-century transformation of MBs (Bates et al., 2022). Furthermore, adopting a simplified procurement and application process to engage their interest and success chances (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). A procurement initiative postulated as an ethnic status leverage enabler to ‘transforming’ EMBs’ involvement into a competitive advantage (Shelton et al., 2018). Conversely, posited a challenge to transforming the recalcitrant structures that define EMBs (Ram, 2019).

The synthesis of the extant literature produced emerging sub-themes as detailed in the combined visual representation of data processing of extant literature in Figure 7 above. The detailed thematic analytical table is illustrated in Appendix 2. Further criticality of the sub-themes emerged as genuine engagement, knowledge exchange and supportive factors to facilitate access as detailed in Figure 10 below. This led the author to develop the literature framework. However, the relationship typology is critically lacking, which the thesis will contribute to.

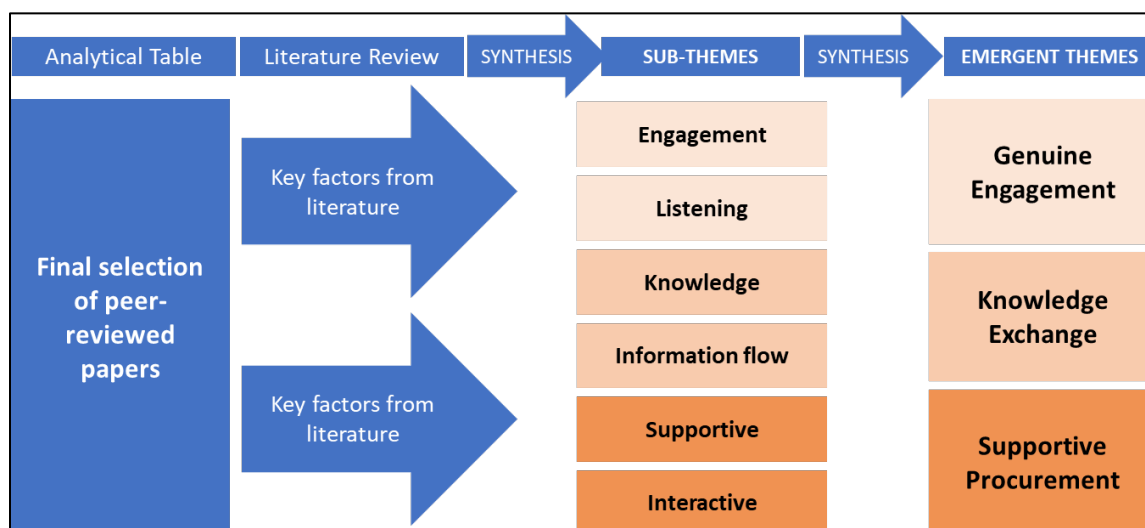


Figure 10: Literature framework for an asset-based, culturally-inclusive, and equitable-system collaborative approach for market access. *Developed by the author.*

The theoretical insight gained in this section on the procurement engagement of EMBs and the approaches to market accessibility and participatory inclusion has helped to answer the research question R1b below. However, there are theoretical gaps in the relationship typology of the emergent factors which this thesis will contribute to.

R1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in

b) equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?

Additionally, the insight gained is strategically important for the commissioners to encourage the participation of ethnic minority businesses as potential grantees and/or contract suppliers. In order to enable their access to procurement frameworks to positively impact supplier diversity and achieve the authorities' ultimate strategic objectives of delivering better outcomes for community members and the economic prosperity of local businesses. To answer research question two, R2.

R2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?

The knowledge will be further built upon in the next section. In order to uncover what factors will enable their sustainable market growth. To move the research closer to answering research questions R3 and ultimately R4.

3. How do the approaches impact the sustainable growth of BAM-led MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

2.4.5 EMBs and Market Growth Approaches

This session of the literature review will focus on and uncover existing theoretical knowledge on how procurement engagement approaches in the public sector market impact the growth of EMBs to move the research closer to answering the third research question R3:

R3. How do the approaches impact their growth and sustainability of BAM-MSEs?

The above section has given a deep insight into the engagement experiences of EMBs with public and business procurement opportunities and approaches to their participatory inclusion. It has uncovered the need to redress systemic barriers by simplifying the complex and bureaucratic procurement processes, lowering the entry threshold level, providing information on what they wish to purchase, expanding the knowledge of EMBs in procurement requirements and processes, support to build their internal protocols and procedures towards contract-readiness. Additionally, engaging in information flow to build trust between them and the entities. Including utilising

ethnically sensitive intermediary agencies in procurement initiatives who understand the needs of EMBs to build connections.

The UK procurement initiatives to facilitate business support of EMBs and access to public procurement opportunities have been wide-ranging (Ram et al., 2003). From mainstream business support agencies funded by the government such as Business Links and Regional Development Agencies were established to provide business support to small businesses including EMBs in England (Ram et al., 2012). However, failed due to inconsistent and underdeveloped approaches and credibility to the engagement of these unique entities (A Cavalcanti and J Ferreira, 2021). To regeneration initiatives like Urban Programme, City Action Team, etc. that equally, failed due to short-lived measures, lack of awareness, lack of credible approach and sensitivity to the needs of EMBs (Ram et al., 2012). To other intermediary agencies including EM-led agencies, following the failings of these mainstream providers to attract EMBs (Sonfield, 2014). However, positive effects were reported in some communities attributed to increasing awareness of EMBs' specific needs (Ram et al., 2014, Sonfield, 2014). Promulgating ethnic-led intermediary agencies to provide targeted procurement engagement and access as seen in the section above (Sonfield, 2014).

Conversely, scholars have reported the economic growth and prosperity of some UK-based EMBs (Sonfield, 2014). However, the majority of EMBs are reported as small and still encountering challenges as espoused above (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Similar issues have dogged US-based EMBs over the decades (Bates et al., 2018).

Aside from the lack of a credible approach and sensitivity to the unique needs of EMBs, short-lived measures of procurement initiative engagement and inconsistencies raise research curiosity. Therefore, this section of the literature review will focus on and uncover the approaches to public and business contract procurement engagement to impact the growth and success of EMBs.

The preferential procurement initiatives in the US engaged the active participation of ethnically focused intermediaries (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Acting as relationship connectors between the EMBs, who were engaged in intermediary-sponsored activities and the public and business sector buyers (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Effectively enabling EMBs to leverage their minority status. Resulting in some minority entrepreneurs realising rapid expansion (higher-growth entrepreneurs) and others overcoming personal limitations and establishing viable enterprises (lower-growth entrepreneurs) (Shelton et al., 2018).

Pan et al., (2022) posited that relationship-building with corporations is fundamental to exposing EMBs for supplier consideration. They reported a positive association with

increased chances of EMBs being considered as suppliers. Purporting that the relationship with the potential purchasers can help alleviate capability concerns. Engendering 'trust'. A fundamental factor in EMBs' decision-making in seeking external support (Hossain et al., 2022). Postulated in their study as a direct consequence of social exclusion that manifests in systemic and societal distrust. Invariably, they distance themselves from the mainstream product market.

More importantly, Pan et al., (2022), posited that trust is developed through repeated past social interactions. Further expanded as a platform for reinforcing shared values and identity stimulated by information flow (Pan et al., 2022). An approach suggested by Shelton et al., (2018) as culminating in established exchange relationships where EMBs feel assured that their race and ethnic backgrounds will not be ill-viewed. While buyers feel comfortable to specifically request business with minority firms (Shelton et al., 2018). Further posited by Pan et al., (2022), as a platform that enables EMBs to demonstrate their values, norms, and goals towards the achievement of mutual engagement.

The social interactions as posited by Pan et al., (2022), are beneficial and of particular significance to ethnic minority businesses that are dependent on socialisation opportunities for building relationships. Having experienced discrimination and social exclusion from network events (Pan et al., 2022). Concurred by Shelton et al., (2018) and consequentially disadvantageous to their business growth. They asserted that networks are imperative information sources for business and market opportunities. Consequentially, exclusion from key networks deprived them of access to some types of product markets, limiting their growth (Shelton et al., 2018). Congruently explicated by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) who reported in their study of businesses that secured contracts through recommendations via network events, including bridging and established networks. Arguably, De Armanios et al., (2017) posited such benefits are accorded to entrepreneurs with sector and skills competency. Thus gaining increased political connections to leverage and secure government contracts directly. Conversely, limiting EMBs with lesser political ties demands an ongoing connection with authorities by intermediaries for market exchange (De Armanios et al., 2017).

Additionally, low-value contracts, exempted from the formal tendering process were secured through networks, reputations and word-of-mouth (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Further supported by Ram (2019) who posited connecting businesses to wider business networks has a direct correlation to increased visibility and diversification opportunities (Ram, 2019). Supported by (Shelton et al., 2018) as a result of increased market knowledge. Additionally, Pan et al., (2022) stated that as EMBs build more relationships with corporations and with other minority members, greater growth is

experienced. However, De Armanios (2017) postulated that for those with lesser political ties, ongoing connection with authorities by intermediaries will be vital for increased market exchange.

However, market suitability is equally deserving of consideration (Shelton et al., 2018). Potentially a barrier to growth for entities that are mainstream averse (Hossain et al., 2022). Conversely, Woldesenbet (2018), argues that the government can utilise public procurement to aid business innovation and local growth for these entities. Congruent with Shelton et al., (2018) whose studies returned a positive impact of preferential procurement initiatives as an enabler to EMBs' participation in the markets best suited to their growth aspirations and personal capabilities.

Even though Hossain et al., (2022), argue that EMBs are mainstream-averse. They posited that peer networks generate social capital (employees, local customers and financial resources) and contribute to their success. Arguing that this network is generated as interdependence with other closely located network members of the group (Hossain et al., 2022). On the contrary, Pan et al., (2022), purport EMBs, through procurement initiatives, utilise peer networks to move closer to the mainstream market. However, to varying degrees. By obtaining support and knowledge about best practice approaches to dealing with the challenges of doing business with large corporations. Further articulated by Ram (2019) who reported peer-to-peer business mentoring support as key to mainstream market growth (Ram, 2019). An approach concurred by Pan et al., (2022), who postulated the value of role models in sharing success stories and best practices in market access and growth.

Considering the failures of earlier mainstream procurement initiatives, such as the short-lived measures. Pan et al., (2022) argue that a relationship-driven dimension to building social capital where shared narratives set clearly defined norms and shared expectations as an enabler to trust building between EMBs and corporate institutions. Congruent with Shelton et al., (2018) as an establishment of exchange relationships with EMBs through extensive information to increase their purchasing power. Concurred by Ram (2019), who postulated the establishment of proactive trust-based relationships with traders. However, highlighted quality time as a prerequisite to building personal familiarity into long-term trustworthy relationships. Conversely, a potential barrier for these often resource-constrained, time-limited entities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022).

However, for continued market success, Bates et al., (2018), argue that incentive modification after the market access of EMBs could be a trade-off. While Shelton et al., (2018) found a well-designed structure to include easing bonding requirements, prompt payment, access to profitable product markets, and lucrative customers as

contributory factors. However, this is not without limitations as it's targeted at stronger minority businesses. Additionally, Bates et al., (2022) purported longer bid lead time if an equitable level of contract awards is to be achieved compared to the white counterparts.

Moreover, Pan et al., (2022), argue for discussions and project collaborations to facilitate longer and higher-quality interactions with large corporations. Postulated and expanded by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) as a mindset changer from ambivalence to aspiring to engage for EMBs when an integrated approach to knowledge development is employed. A model of co-production of knowledge that involves funder, project teams, consultants, small businesses and researchers. Further strengthening the relationship dimension of building social capital (Pan et al., 2022).

Additionally, Pan et al., (2022) assert the approach of giving EMBs direct business opportunities and referrals to other market opportunities. An approach supported and expanded by Bates et al., (2022) who posited the opening up of the procurement market by listing purchasing councils' and corporations' procurement needs and minority-owned businesses' product offerings. Giving EMBs more visibility (Ram, 2019). However, not without limitations, as EMBs with strong education, expertise, skills, and relevant work experience are more favoured (Bates et al., 2022).

In summary, the extant literature explicates a consensus by researchers on the strength of deepening relationship-building through diverse platforms to positively impact EMBs' business growth in the public sector market. However, procurement initiative studies, including the three theoretical studies that underpinned this thesis, are critically lacking the best relationship typology. Even though the studies highlight the value of using ethnically sensitive intermediaries to deepen connections and relationships between EMBs and procuring public sector organisations. Highlighting the impact of social inclusion in key networks where personal familiarity could be fostered. As well as an opportunity to share values, norms and expectations to engender stronger and more trustworthy relationship building. Conversely, there is a critical limitation as minority businesses with higher educational status are particularly favoured (De Armanios et al., 2017, Bates et al., 2022). However, Pan et al., (2022) purport extending the use of peer-to-peer assistance to include business mentoring and sharing of success stories by role models to promote market growth.

Furthermore, incentivising these entities by adopting post-market support. Such as prompt payment, recommendations, and exposure to profitable markets and lucrative customers to aid diversification and growth (Shelton et al., 2018). Again, it is not without critical limitations as it targets stronger minority businesses, exposing a literature gap to which the thesis will contribute. However, their study reveals the

importance of equitable mechanisms such as longer bid lead time and longer and higher-quality interactions with the purchasing organisations for this time-constrained entity. Equally highlighted is the importance of adopting a collaborative and integrated approach to knowledge development in influencing a mindset shift from ambivalence to aspiring to market engagers (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). In order to develop a stronger social capital (employees, local customers and financial resources) to contribute to their success (Hossain et al., 2022). Purported to move them closer to market viability by building social capital (Pan et al., 2022).

The synthesis of the extant literature produced emerging sub-themes as detailed in the combined visual representation of extant literature data processing in Figure 7 above. Similarly, detailed in the thematic analytical table in Appendix 3. Further criticality of the sub-themes led to the emergent themes: integrated, motivational and progressive factors and the construction of the literature framework by the author as illustrated in Figure 011 below.

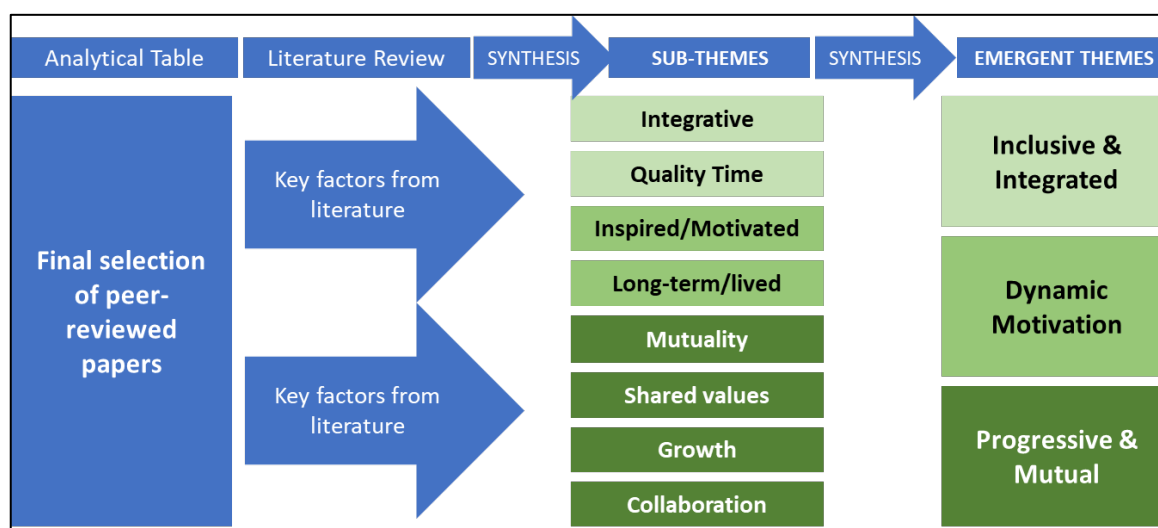


Figure 011: Literature framework for an asset-based culturally-inclusive and equitable-system collaborative approach for market growth. *Developed by the author.*

Overall, insight has been gained in this section on the approaches to market growth of EMBs to answer the research question (R3a) below. However, there is a gap in the relationship typology of the emergent factors, which this thesis will contribute to.

- R3. How do the approaches impact the
 - a. growth of BAM-led MSES?

Despite the insight, there are limitations on how the impact on growth can be sustained, which this doctoral study will address to move the research closer to answering the research question (R3b) and, ultimately, the research question (R4).

- R3. How do the approaches impact the
 - b. sustainability of BAM-led MSES?
- R4. What does it mean in practice?

2.5 The Literature Summary

Firstly, rich insight was gained from synthesising extant literature on the asset-based model of collaboration. The findings from the review provided grounding for the subsequent literature streams to answer the research questions. Additionally, it led to the author's development of a preliminary theoretical framework in Figure 6 above. Bruursema (2015) concurs with Pretorius and Nel (2012) on the positive impact of asset-based against needs-based when complemented with participatory frameworks. Asserted by Harrison et al., (2019) and congruent with the other two studies that is, a relationship-driven model. A power dynamic shift from accountability-led actions to objectives-led actions. However, Harrison et al., (2019) suggest that the relationship-driven model as an inclusive approach, but knowledge is cited as not sufficient on the emergent relationship properties. Therefore, this doctoral study will extend knowledge and contribute to the emergent properties of relationship building in asset-based capacity-building collaboration of the phenomenon being studied.

The extant literature reviewed following the grounding as summarised above accords due respect to the ongoing academic research and policy development. In cognizance of the socio-political events during and after Covid-19. From the extant literature, the theoretical conceptual frameworks in Figures 9, 10 and 11 above illustrate the current state of the art. The findings comprise the moving parts such as capacity building support of ethnic minority businesses for public sector market engagement, their experience in market engagement and the approach to access grant/contract opportunities for business growth.

Furthermore, from the findings and consensus, these known variables and their intertwined interactions to reverse non-engagement and advance engagement choices are understood. Particularly the research conducted in the UK (Woldesenbet et al., 2018) and in the US (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Significant insight has been gained on the factors that impacted the non-engagement of the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, the findings of some of the strategies adopted to facilitate engagement and access to the market.

However, despite all the research and what is known, there are limitations. Some grounded theories have been provided to explain why smaller firms often encounter challenges in supplying public sector organisations and approaches to positive engagement. However, knowledge is cited as not sufficient for generalizability and to implicate enterprise policy and practice. The study was limited to a local supplier development initiative and a purposively selected sample (Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

Similarly, knowledge of key barriers to minority ethnic market access has been developed. In addition, the approaches to overcoming them through government and commercial supplier diversity initiatives. The study is limited to the case of preferential procurement programs for high-growth MEs in Los Angeles, USA and is cited as deserving of further study outside of Los Angeles for its broad applicability to the lower-ranked businesses and the practical implications (Shelton et al., 2018).

A body of knowledge is gained on procurement initiatives in the USA and the role of institutional intermediaries in connecting members to resources including market access. Knowledge is cited as not sufficient for generalizability outside of the US and to other types of intermediaries that are established to connect their members to valuable resources. Including limitations on minority businesses' participation across different types of intermediaries. Finally, knowledge is cited as insufficient on relationship dynamics formed through intermediary-sponsored procurement initiatives and a call for qualitative case study research to gain deeper insights (Pan et al., 2022).

In addition, the practice finding is critical of the lack of relationship typology in procurement and business support literature to understand the impact of time passage on this relationship-driven engagement. Furthermore, the nuanced dyadic approach between community and authorities to promote sustainable growth.

Therefore, this doctoral study contributes uniquely to the body of knowledge theoretically and practically by addressing the research questions:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

The next chapter documents the linkages between literature and practical frameworks and the identified critical gaps which call for a new conceptual framework in the business support of minority ethnic micro-small enterprises and the research field.

Chapter Three – Theoretical and Practical Linkages

3.1 Introduction to Linkage of Thesis Volumes

This chapter aims to bring together the project-informed framework from volume one of the theses, and the extant literature-informed framework from the current volume to aid the identification of critical gaps and strengthen the discussion for the development of a new framework.

Secondly, the chapter will highlight the connection of the four relationship typologies, transactional, functional, transformational and relational, in volume one to the extant entrepreneurship literature to aid critical discussion and contribution to knowledge.

3.2 The Preliminary Grounding for Practical Knowledge

The COVID-19 pandemic period unfolded an unprecedented wave of void in the government's accessibility to communities. Arising from pre-existing distrust and poor engagement, the period saw a surge in food poverty, digital poverty, cultural and language barriers, reluctance to vaccination and disproportionate morbidity and mortality (I Litchfield, D Shukla and S Greenfield, 2021). This led to a strategic rethink by the authorities. Forced to embrace inclusive communications through community leaders, trusted professionals and communicators to disseminate information and facilitate community engagement (Mahmood et al., 2021).

The prolonged challenges brought on by the pandemic invariably led to an increased representation and visibility of ethnic groups in communication. Researchers reported increased support provision to local groups to set up food banks, community shopping and delivery, and distribution of protective equipment (Mahmood et al., 2021). Authorities covertly or overtly relaxed their regulatory rules to permit informal groups or contracted community organisations to pivot and channel delivery to meet local needs (Harris, 2021). Thus, provoking a 'relationship building' to enhance interactions and community participation. Further forcing the breakdown of the pre-pandemic systemic barriers. An approach that is not void of challenges and requires the capacity building of the ethnic minority organisations (EMOs) to maximise goal achievement.

Thus, a shift to a less stringent, more engaging approach and support for EMBs due to growing recognition by the authorities of their resourcefulness (E. Pretorius and H. Nel, 2012), (Bruursema, 2015). Enabling access to market participation (P Lassalle and JM Scott, 2018). Invariably, the shift and landscape change aroused the interest of researchers in a sector that has been undervalued (Ram M. , 2022). Congruent with Kamal et al., (2021), who reported collaborative approaches with ethnic community networks and leaders to facilitate community engagement.

Historically acquainted with a high-risk environment engulfed with uncertainties and constraints due to racial, cultural, skills, knowledge, and experience differences (Duan et al., 2021). Their human and social capital as assets to mobilise resources accorded them long-overdue value and recognition (Korede et al., 2023). A familiar observation by the author because of their closeness to the pandemic period experiences and two decades of field experience in enterprise support and stakeholder engagement. This informed their initial engagement strategy. Expressly, relationship building is congruent with the extant literature on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) which, provided grounding for this study (Harrison et al., 2019).

The ABCD approach is posited as building on existing strengths and assets of communities, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised communities with little decision-making power (Pretorius and Nel, 2012). It's purported as a social capital enhancer and challenges existing power structures for change in an authentic way (Bruursema, 2015). Furthermore, an approach to mutual support and collective actions that can help identify and build upon existing economic assets within a community to impact positive change (Pan et al., 2019). Potentially creating new economic opportunities for the community (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). However, it has been critiqued as failing to address significant power differences and could potentially reinforce existing inequalities if not carefully managed (Fursova, 2016). Further critiqued as lacking sufficient high-quality evidence of effective sustainability in practice and broader systemic issues that contribute to community challenges (M.A. MacLeod and A. Emejulu, 2014). Nevertheless, there is consensus among several researchers on the benefits of ABCD to enhance community well-being, social capital, and resilience by leveraging local assets, skills, and resources which leads to more sustainable development and social change (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003), (Russell, 2010), (Russell, 2021).

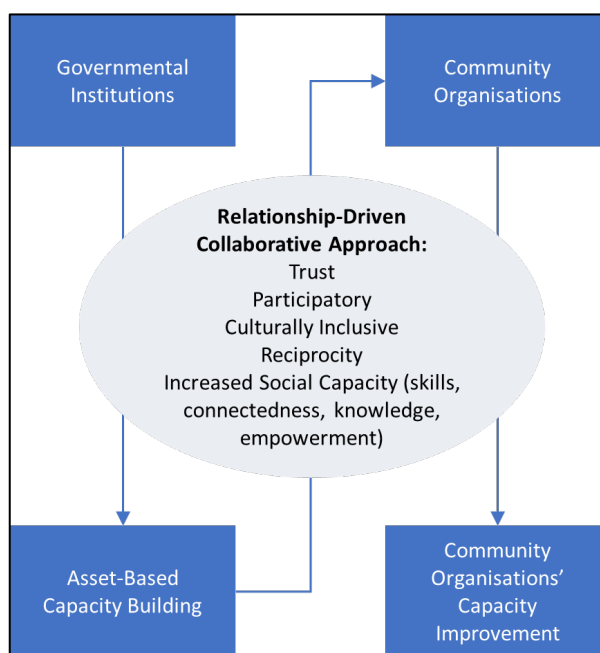
The PhD study applied a systematic approach, as detailed in Chapter 2 above, to the literature review with an initial search of extant literature on the capacity development of minority-led micro-small businesses. Particularly, papers that highlight the development of these businesses from a community strength perspective as perceived and fundamental to what the authorities embraced during the pandemic. Amongst the several pieces of literature generated, the papers deemed relevant and included in the review were predominantly on ABCD. This highlighted a critical gap in enterprise literature for minoritised businesses' community strength-based capacity development. Nonetheless, the ABCD papers by Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) are critically examined to provide a preliminary grounding for the knowledge uncovered in the three practitioner-based projects. Harrison et al., (2019) offer the closest insight for the study in the 'asset-based

collaborative' approach. This led the author to the construction of a preliminary framework utilised by the author as a fundamental mechanism to provide a grounding for the knowledge uncovered in the three projects.

3.3 The Link between Theory and Practice

The key features from extant knowledge, as illustrated in the framework below, namely trust, cultural inclusion, and participation, align with practice findings where study phenomena highlighted trust and cultural relatability, particularly through support via ethnic-led community organisations to facilitate participation. The co-ethnic lens further promotes clear communication and an easier connection to shared goals as articulated by the authorities in the table below. Equally, supported by researchers who assert that co-ethnic relationships increase the natural communication flow and a greater sense of loyalty and friendships (Haq et al., 2021). Elucidated as reciprocity in the extant literature (Harrison et al., 2019). While the combined ABCD features are reported as enablers to increase social capital (Russell, 2010). However, one of the few critiques of the ABCD approach purports a lack of insufficient high-quality evidence of the effectiveness in practice and broader systemic issues that contribute to community challenges (M.A. MacLeod and A. Emejulu, 2014). Despite the ABCD model providing a preliminary grounding for the project, the project finding is critical of the change sustainability model, even with the potential for good outcomes. Thus, adding a body of evidence to the sustainability critique of the ABCD approach in community capacity development.

Consequentially, the tables below are derived from the reflectivity of the project analysed data with the extant literature denoting 'asset' in community development as the 'strength' of individuals and communities (J Foot and T Hopkins, 2010), (C Blickem, S Dawson, S Kirk, I Vassilev, A Mathieson, R Harrison and P Bower, 2018). It is further expounded as the existing resources, strengths, and capabilities within a community that can be leveraged for its development and improvement (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003), (Russell, 2021). The three body of literature that underpinned the thesis' preliminary insight into the ABCD model posits it as a collaborative relationship-driven approach between communities and authorities. In particular, the closest study (Harrison et al., 2019). However, despite Harrison et al., (2019) purport that the ABCD relationship-driven model is an inclusive approach, they cited knowledge as not sufficient on the emergent relationship properties to support sustainable change. Therefore, this doctoral study will extend knowledge and contribute to the emergent properties of relationship building in asset-based capacity-building collaboration of the phenomenon being studied.



Preliminary conceptual framework for asset-based collaborative approach

Developed by the author.

The evidence of project-featured community/sector needs knowledge congruent with extant knowledge of characters of local assets.

Community/Sector Needs Knowledge	Rating
Project One (adult social care sector)	90%
Project Two (retail, hospitality & professional services sectors)	100%
Project Three (retail, hospitality & professional services sectors)	100%

The project-featured initial market position assessment results highlight evidence of negative impacts encountered and/or additional barriers.

Project One - Contract Readiness	50%
Project One - Currently Bidding for Contracts	27%
Project Two – In-person Trading	72%
Project Two – Negatively Impacted by Covid	73%
Project Two – In-person Trading	76%
Project Two – Disproportionate ownership (women/BAME/disabled)	94%/82%/41%

The project featured themes of an asset-based collaborative model drawn from the authorities' quotes that are congruent with extant literature.

Projects	Collaboration	Locally Based	Change-Mechanism	Disadvantage
One	Working together Holistic service Working closely with local communities	Locality-based. Delivered by local people. Micro-providers Local communities close to their neighbours.	Holistic service Mechanisms designed to increase numbers	Individuals /micros not getting as much opportunity, perhaps as they should have been
Two	Partnered with. Working closely.	Islington-based race equality charity. Ethnic owned businesses in the borough.	Culturally tailored to support local BAME.	Face many challenges. Unique barriers.
Three	Partnership with BTEG. Share our determination.	Local communities. Talented people, BAME with great ideas and big ambitions.	1 st for the council. Help communities build back differently Innovative approach. Extra support in a changing world	Address inequality. Additional barriers compared to entrepreneurs as a whole

The project featured themes seen in the asset-based model: culture, trust and relationship, with the exclusion of relatability.

Project One

<i>"I like the fact that you are black as well. Am glad."</i>	Cultural Inclusion
<i>"My engagement with BSWN in the last 8 months has given me the right perspective. We need organisations like this."</i>	Relatable
<i>"The main thing I feel is that you understand exactly where we're coming from, you understood the challenges and need for support."</i>	Trust Relationship
<i>"Ways to overcome barriers is strategic liaison between council officers and community organisations, building relationships & trust"</i>	

Project Two

<i>"The trust of having someone that looks like you providing this consultation and feeling you are not going to be judged and you can easily communicate your challenges."</i>	Trust Cultural Inclusion
<i>"The importance of having a BAME consultant to support my business as a <u>black woman</u> to fill educational gaps"</i>	Relatable

<i>"I think the support session for me is relationship building"</i>	Relationship
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Project Three

<i>"Cultural appropriate consultants/team [ARE] were necessary to build trust"</i>	Cultural Inclusion Trust
<i>"Upcoming event with them [the council] will help build the relationship."</i>	Relationship
<i>'They [black consultant] are easier to relate to which is important when receiving support'... 'they were necessary to build trust'</i>	Relatable Trust

The criticality of theory and practice findings highlights the aspect of relatability aside from relationships, trust and cultural inclusion, as articulated by the quotes from the study phenomenon illustrated above. Furthermore, the study phenomenon articulated relatability as a critical element of cultural inclusion, which encourages MEMSEs' engagement in market support. The facilitation of the support by ethnic consultants was instrumental in influencing their mindset shift from ambivalent to aspirant in considering non-traditional market opportunities. Opening up their minds to co-ethnic trading 'break-out' (P Lassalle and JM Scott, 2018). To promote 'breakthrough' exploration into the mainstream (Basu, 2010). Additionally, the mindset shifts from aspirant to engaged is purported to lead to market access enabled by an equitable systemic approach (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). This UK study on procurement initiatives combined with the US-based studies provided extant knowledge in preferential procurement initiatives for EMBs' market access and growth (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Despite the rich insights gained from these main bodies of literature and their emphasis on bridging connections and relationship-building, arguably to varying degrees, there is a gap in the relationship models that could facilitate the approach to market access and growth for these study phenomena. Pan et al., (2022), highlight this through their call for qualitative research to gain deep insights into the dynamics of relationships formed through intermediaries.

3.4 The Practice-Informed Theoretical Gaps

In essence, insight into relationship typologies and their impact on business support and market growth is critical. Fundamentally, business relationships are often viewed as dynamic, evolving and influenced by factors such as collaborative communication, time, coordination strategies, etc. (P A Dabholkar, W J Johnston and A S Cathey, 1994). Essentially purported as encompassing both economic and social aspects (E L. Glaeser, D Laibson and B Sacerdote, 2002).

Conversely, the thesis is critical of the dearth of research papers on relationship typology in ME enterprise support or preferential procurement initiatives. Consequentially, the author conducted the criticality of obtainable and peer-reviewed extant literature which informed the four relationship typologies below. Despite, the studies being largely unrelated to enterprise support, they provided extant knowledge of dyadic relationships in human interactions within operational and partnership environments. Six out of nine studies reviewed were in supply chain management including a study on the perspective of business-to-business partners in supply chain relationship approaches (Jamaluddin et al., 2021). Except Nikulina et al., (2022) in project management, Butcher et al., (2011) in higher education, and Thompson et al., (2017) Journal of Community Service Learning with a focus on the structure of engineering engagement programmes within partnership models. Consequentially, this further confirms the knowledge gap in relationship factors in the community development and business support sectors.

3.5 The Practice-Informed Theoretical Contributions

The PhD study highlights the theoretical gap in relationship typology in enterprise support research papers, as documented in section 3.4 above, and uniquely extends the knowledge. The synthesis of the obtainable and peer-reviewed papers led to the development of the illustrated summarised analytical table of the relationship factors drawn from numerous studies (*A Purwantoa and Julianaa, 2022*); (*A Nikulina, L Volker, M Bosch-Rekveltd, 2022*); (*FC Schultz, S Everding and P Ingo, 2021*); (*F Jamaluddin and N Saibani, October 2021*); (*SM Vasin, LA Gamidullaeva, NA Wise and KY Korolev, 2020*); (*Vanichchinchai, 2019*); (*J D. Thompson & B K. Jesie, Spring 2017*); (*J. Butcher, M Bezzina & W. Moran, Feb 2011*); (*Grant, 2005*).

Theory Informed: Relationship-Analysed Themes and Factors

Transactional approach	Functional approach	Transformational approach	Relational approach
<i>Jamaluddin et al., (2017); Thompson et al., (2017)</i>	<i>Schultz et al., (2021)</i>	<i>Purwantoa et al (2022); Vasin et al (2020); Vanichchinchai (2019); Butcher et al., (2011)</i>	<i>Nikulina et al., (2022); Grant (2005)</i>
Short-lived engagement	Short to mid-lived	Medium to long-lived	Long-lived engagement
Distrust	Trust (cursory)	Trust (open)	Trust (open & active)

Distance	Respect	Genuine engagement	Inclusive and integrated
Non-relatable	Clear communication	Listening	Active listening
Self-serving	Shared goals	Common goal-serving	Dynamic and interactive
One-sided	Flexibility	Supportive	Progressive and mutual

3.6 The Theory-Informed Thesis Relationship Concepts

In keeping with the systematic approach to the study, the knowledge from extant literature, as explicated in section 3.5 above, provided a fundamental mechanism to categorise the relationship factors that emerged in the study. The impact of time on how the relationship evolved in practice is noteworthy. From the pre-COVID service-led approach based on a transactional relationship, which is distant and non-relatable, to what transcended into a more flexible and functional relationship during COVID-19. Activating community engagement as authorities deemed flexibility as essential to achieve shared goals. Later, developed into a transformational relationship as interactions between both sides (authorities and communities) were increasingly perceived as supportive by communities. Prolonged interactions later transcended into a relational relationship as an active and open integrative approach is experienced. This led to the relationship categorisation in the layered practice-informed conceptual framework detailed in Chapter 6, pages 183-184 of Volume One.

Starting with the pre-Covid **Service-Based** form of engagement manifesting in factors such as:

Transactional Factors

Distrust, Distance, Non-Relatable, Self-Serving, One-Sided

To project informed participatory factors of EMBs in an **Asset-Based** engagement model such as:

Functional Factors

Trust, Respect, Flexible, Shared Goals, Clear Communication

To project informed capacity building and market access support analysed themes

Transformational Factors

Supportive, Knowledge sharing/exchange, Engagement, Interactive, Openness, Listening, Information flow, Empathy, Relatable
--

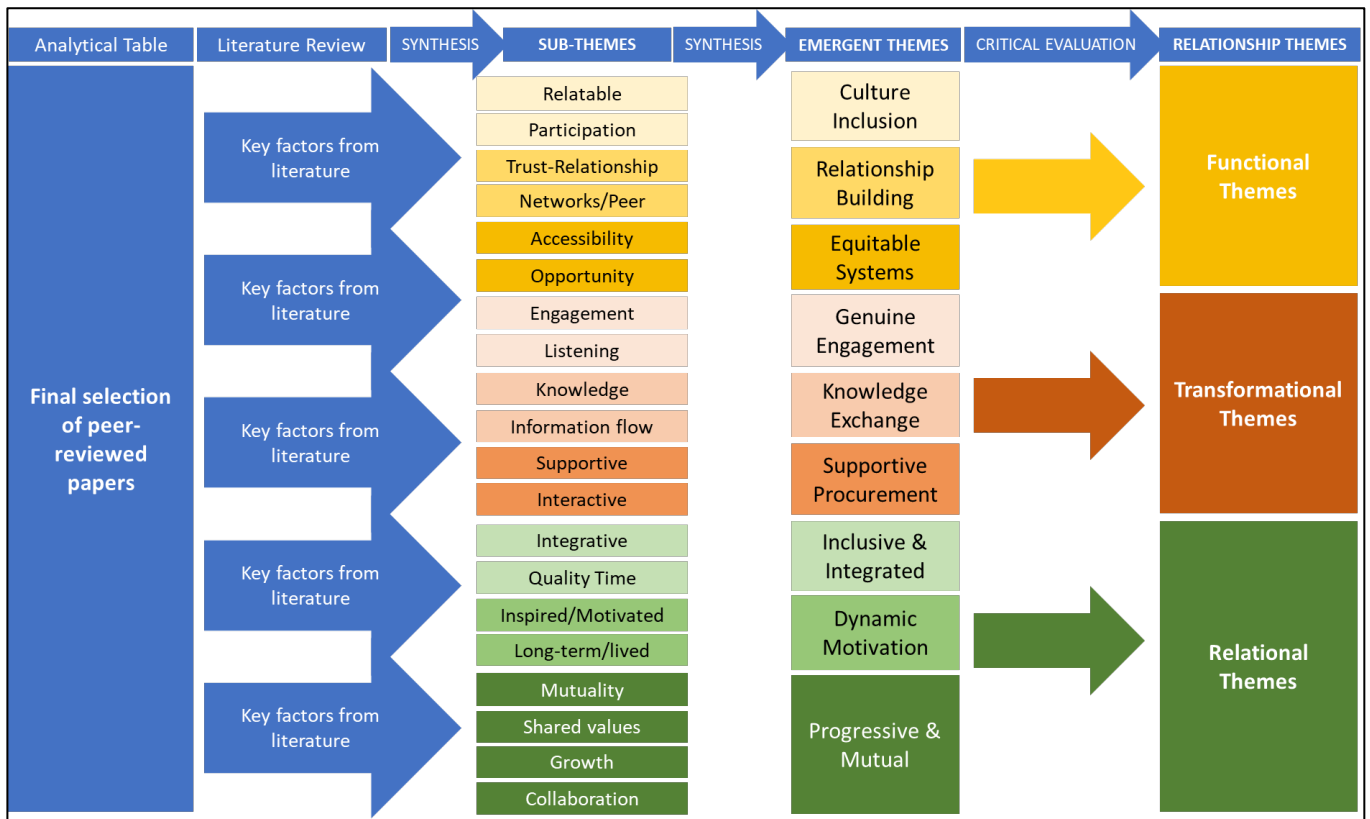
To project informed sustainable market growth support analysed themes

Relational Factors

Longer term/relationship/connection, Increased interaction, Valued, Listen, Open Trust/Communication, Dynamic, Progressive, Mutual, Motivational, Inclusive, Integrated, Inspirational, Customised
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3.7 The Thesis-Informed Novel Theoretical Framework

The insights gained from the practitioner-based projects on the nuanced dyadic factors between the authorities and the communities brokered through the intermediary agencies evolved throughout the projects. The summarised themes developed from the rich data presented under each project in Volume One are explicated in the tables above under section 3.6. The thesis contributes to relationship factors through the retrospective review of the theory-informed thematic relationship factors in section 3.5 table above with the themed collected data from the projects shown under section 3.6 above. This informed the relationship factors of the layered theoretical framework development shown below. This new framework extends the layered literature frameworks constructed in Chapter 2. That is the framework on capacity building support in section 2.4.3 Figure 009, the market access support in section 2.4.4 Figure 010 and the market growth support in section 2.4.5 Figure 011 through connectivity to relationship typology constructs.



A new theoretical framework developed by the author.

Chapter Four – The Study Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The structure of this chapter elopes normalism being a PhD by Portfolio study, unlike the traditional PhD by Research that requires a new and original research project (Neumann, 2005). This route, PhD by Portfolio, allows experienced professionals/practitioners to showcase and contextualise their life's work and gain academic recognition for their contribution to their field (Maxwell, 2003). Akin to, but yet unique from, PhD by Publication that allows researchers with existing publications to gain recognition for their prior research without engaging in new research projects from scratch (Peacock, 2017).

This type of research descends from abstract theory to tackle actual problems encountered in real-life settings (J Alpenberg and D P Scarbrough, 2021). Thus, it has relevance to real-world practice and is acclaimed by researchers as practice-oriented research that aims to address concrete challenges faced by practitioners and provide specific, actionable recommendations (S Shorrocks and C Williams, 2016). By focusing on practical implications, this research can directly inform policymakers and practitioners about effective instruments and approaches to address societal challenges (E de Weert and F Leijnse, 2010).

Despite the potential of the PhD by portfolio to change how practitioners think about and implement their work, there are limitations to this structure. In particular, integrating isolated facts in an attempt to put them into perspective and make connections across projects or disciplines, placing the specialities in a larger context through data revelation (Maxwell, 2003). Again, akin to PhD by Publication, synthesising multiple publications into a coherent narrative that demonstrates an original contribution to knowledge can present challenges. Additionally, the retrospective nature of PhD by portfolio, similar to PhD by publication, could present a limited opportunity for new research or exploration of different ideas (Horta, 2016). However, with the evolution of knowledge and decentralisation in the global landscape, academe activities are increasingly connected with those of the profession (Levine, Why Do Practitioners Want to Connect with Researchers? Evidence from a Field Experiment, 2020). Thus impacting the development of Professional Doctorates within higher education in general and doctoral education in particular (T.W. Maxwell, C Hickey and T Evans, 2004).

4.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The first volume of this doctoral study documents the three unique projects and the findings in practice. All three projects were spurred by the dynamic changes invoked by Covid-19. The realisation of the disproportionate representation of minoritized businesses in the supplier chain or market success. Yet a community that displayed ingenuity during the pandemic to reach and support their local community (Korede et al., 2023). Conversely, a significantly challenging task for the authorities (Olarewaju et al., 2023). Hence, a propellant to engaging with the ethnic community leaders to enhance community participation in service delivery (Mahmood et al., 2021). Consequentially, a catalyst for the exploration of market access and supplier diversity initiatives and associated enablers.

All three projects, even though they are uniquely different, have a unique connection. Specifically, the capacity building of Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises (ME-MSEs) into market access and sustainable growth through the model of asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration between the community (MEMSEs) and the authority (commissioners). This uniquely connects the three projects. To promote and facilitate productive, relatable, and meaningful engagement and resultant outcomes, namely organisational development and better access to opportunities for sustainable growth of the entity (MEMSEs). This sets the scene for the theoretical underpinning of this volume.

This second volume of the study explores and gains theoretical insight into the research area. That is, the theoretical approaches to business support and market access for the phenomenon being studied to help address the research aim below.

“Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and sustainable growth of Minority ethnic-led Micro-Small Enterprises (ME-MSEs)”

In this volume of the research study, the author as a researcher appraises, critically analyses and ultimately addresses the research questions arising from the reflective review of the portfolio of practitioner-based projects as detailed in volume one:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

The knowledge gained from the extant literature critical analysis and the learning from the projects contribute new knowledge to the field.

4.3 Methodological Approach

This PhD by portfolio-based projects was grounded in a qualitative approach to hone in and hear the voices of the ME-MSE actors to aid an understanding of their challenges. Inherently, if this thesis was isolated from the academic study and conducted a qualitative reflection on the project approach, it was grounded in a qualitative form. Stemming out of that is this doctoral study which builds on that qualitative approach and adopts a real qualitative methodology. Where the author looks at this inductively and how this contributes to a new, unique, emerging theory. In keeping with PhD by portfolio methodology, extant knowledge was retrospectively analysed against practice findings to inform new insight and contribution to theory.

Therefore, the study documents this systematic study's philosophical and methodological approach. It summarises the purpose of the portfolio-based research study and the research aim and objectives. Later considers varied philosophical models and suitability before the justification of chosen instruments and applications. Lastly, it documents the limitations of the chosen approaches and the study's ethical considerations.

4.4 Research Philosophy

Using a portfolio of three projects comprising 39 fully engaged ME-MSEs from two case-studied local authorities who partnered with two infrastructure organisations as a research strategy, the study adopted an interpretivist philosophy (D Wickramasinghe and C Alawattage, 2017). The use of case study research as a strategy of inquiry is associated with a detailed examination of a particular case or cases to gain a comprehensive understanding of complex issues in their natural settings (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Primarily, the purpose is to explore and explain complex phenomena to generate rich, contextual insights and develop or refine theories to answer "how" and "why" questions about real-life events (Yin, 2018). Notably, their study dissociates the "what" questions from a case study but rather associates it with a survey study. Conversely, other researchers have acclaimed it as suitable for case studies to answer descriptive questions "what" (I Sahin and A Yildirim, 2016). Congruently, and further purported that the underlying question in case studies is "what" are the characteristics of this particular entity, phenomenon or people (A K Ary, A R Prabowo and F Imaduddin, 2020).

Additionally, it is postulated that the case study approach relies on multiple sources of evidence (e.g. interviews, documents, observations) for data triangulation (Sahin et al., 2016). The PhD study achieved data triangulation from multiple data sources (direct observation, multiple sources of feedback, published documents and reports by the authorities, etc). Despite its benefits, particularly being valuable when there is a need to obtain a rich, detailed understanding of a specific issue or phenomenon in its natural context, it is not without limitations (Yin, 2018). Mostly, posited a limited generalizability of findings, potential research bias and time-consuming and resource-intensive (Stake, 1995).

Furthermore, the study employed an inductive qualitative methodological approach (B Glaser and A Strauss, 2017). The inductive approach is opined a good fit that involves specific observations or data and moves towards broader generalizations for theory development (Charmaz, 2008). It is often associated with the qualitative research method and is useful for investigating new or understudied topics to help build up clear connections between research objectives and research findings (Lisha, 2016). Thus, apt for this study as rich and deep insight gained from the human experiences of ME-MSEs barriers and enablers in public market engagement is theory emergent.

In developing enquiries that propel research studies, Guba (1990) opines that some model choices are influenced by what is being investigated through subsection to three questions: the ontological, epistemological, and methodological models.

Researchers opine that the ontological model is concerned with what exists in the knowledge ecosystem. It deals with the "what" questions, such as "What is real?" or "What exists?" The model focuses on the core characteristics and origins of phenomena. The result of this helps form the basis for research frameworks (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Conversely, Skarpelis (2020) opines that the epistemological model focuses on the relationship between the researcher and the known knowledge. It examines the nature of knowledge and "how" we acquire it. It explores questions like "How do we know what we know?" and "What constitutes valid knowledge? Therefore, the epistemological assumptions guide research questions and methods, enabling investigation of the distinction between justified belief and opinion. Thus, aiding the provision of evidence for conclusions and inferences.

Lastly, the methodological approach prioritises how knowledge is obtained and refers to the systematic approach used to conduct research and obtain knowledge. It encompasses the overall research design and strategy, including the specific methods

and techniques for data collection and analysis. Ultimately, the philosophical approach informs the research process (Karami, Rowley and Analoui, 2006).

Consequentially, in keeping with hearing the voices and experiences of the study phenomena, the study adopts an interpretive phenomenology to uncover the study phenomena' direct human experiences and interactions (Noon, 2018). Unlike the deductive research approach, which tests hypotheses derived from existing theories, interpretive research focuses on understanding social phenomena through individuals' subjective experiences and interpretations (Dallmayr, 2009). It allows for a deeper understanding of complex social processes and human experiences. It is particularly valuable for theory construction in areas with little or no existing theory, as it allows for the emergence of new concepts and ideas (Yin, 2018).

Despite its benefits, exploratory qualitative research design has been critiqued for limited generalizability and sample size appropriateness. However, Yin (1994 & 2009) argues the appropriateness of employing an exploratory qualitative research design for studying complex phenomena about which knowledge is relatively limited. Correspondingly, the US is decades ahead of the UK and, since 1967, passed legislative authorisation to use the preferential procurement initiative process to support socioeconomically disadvantaged businesses (Pan et al., 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic uncovered gaps in UK supplier diversity initiatives (Harris, 2021).

In summary, the interpretive qualitative study uncovers hidden reasons behind intricate social dynamics that may be difficult to capture through quantitative methods. Ontologically recognising that reality is not fixed but intersubjective and requires real-life interactions. A valuable approach to rich phenomenological insight when exploring complex social phenomena to uncover nuances. However, there is recognition of the critiqued potential subjectivity of the researcher's active role in shaping knowledge contributed by ME-MSEs' diverse perspectives (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2002). As a result of conducting epistemological data interpretation, which cannot be fully detached from the research process (V Braun and V Clarke, 2016). Consequentially, due attention was observed by the author in reviewing the themes for each project as independent topics. Interpretation was kept as close to data as possible, and triangulation from more than one data source was achieved for most of the cause-and-effect relationships (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991).

4.5 Research Strategy

A systematic approach was employed in this study. Data collected from the sample size of 39 fully engaged ME-MSE businesses across the three projects was thematically analysed (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The project participants were drawn through non-probability (purposive and snowball) sampling (V Braun and V Clarke, 2019). Unlike probability sampling, which is based on strict randomisation and the creation of detailed sampling frames, non-probability sampling is based on specific criteria, affording flexibility and the ability to target particular segments or niche populations that may be difficult to reach through random sampling (Uprichard, 2013). Therefore, it was a good fit for the study.

Initially, the study adopted a purposive sampling but was later complemented by a snowball approach to reach a good number (MA. Valerio, N Rodriguez, P Winkler, J Lopez, M Dennison, Y Liang and BJ. Turner, 2016). To support the gathering of richly textured data relevant to the studied phenomenon (K Vasileiou, J Barnett, S Thorpe and T Young, 2018). However, the question of an appropriate sample size in qualitative research has dogged researchers for many decades (S A Mthuli, F Ruffin and N Singh, 2021). Nonetheless, qualitative study has been documented as a contributor to quality standards development (V Braun and V Clarke, 2016). Whereby size appropriateness, in essence, data saturation, is assumed as adequate if the research question(s) is answered (G Guest, A Bunce, and L Johnson, 2006). As observed in this PhD study.

4.6 Data Collection

In keeping with the multiple data sources of a qualitative case study approach, to inform data triangulation, a range of primary and secondary data was employed in this portfolio-based study (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991). As a professional practitioner and the project leads on the practitioner-based projects detailed in Volume One of this study, the author reviewed several data.

The projects were conducted between 2021 and 2023. Project One was delivered from April 2021 to March 2023, and the evaluation report was launched in June 2023. Project Two was conducted from December 2021 to November 2022, and Project Three from January 2023 to December 2023, with a report of an external evaluation conducted for both projects. The PhD study commenced in April 2023.

On the portfolio of projects, data collection was led by the author through a range of primary sources such as participants' diagnostic and survey questionnaires (Couper, 2017). Feedback from one-to-one consultations largely led by the author, workshops and peer group interactions facilitated and/or delivered by the author, and network

events (McLafferty, 2004). Additionally, data was collected through direct practitioner observations across a range of interactions between officers and communities (SA Mazhar, R Anjum, AI Anwar and AA Khan, 2021).

In the PhD study, secondary data such as publicly available documents, procurement strategy, strategic intent, consultation results, etc, was collected from councils' websites, ARE and BSWN websites and other publicly available legitimate sites. However, in keeping with ethical conduct, across all projects, the study has not included any known sensitive materials (Northouse, 2013). Additionally, anonymity was chosen for all ME-MSE actors who took part in the projects to protect their identity (USW Guide to Ethical Report, 2019).

The author was largely involved in data collection on all 3 'test and learn' or 'pilot' projects commissioned by the councils. Both ARE and BSWN had obtained consent from the eligible ME-MSE participants for data collection and use including for evaluation, documented reports and web-based reports and/or case studies to showcase successes. As documented in Volume One of this study, the author took over Project One a few weeks into the project launch. An initial diagnostic was conducted using Google Forms to collect data from 13 potential participants and stored in a secure electronic folder. The author engaged five additional participants who completed the Google Form and similarly securely stored it on Google Sheets. In Project Two, the pre-diagnostic survey was completed by 12 participants and downloaded onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for secure storage. Project Three involved a short application process and interview, including a conversational assessment with 17 eligible participants, which was recorded on an MS Excel spreadsheet and securely stored.

As a lead on the projects, the author was closely and largely involved in all the projects. This included direct one-to-one consultancy support in all three projects, where feedback was collected after each session and recorded on secure spreadsheets developed by the author for each project. Similarly, the author facilitated peer-to-peer learning and masterclasses in Project One. Feedback for the sessions was collected through questionnaires which the author had developed. The author led the majority of masterclasses and all the Action Learning Sets on Projects Two and Three. Feedback for masterclasses was collected through questionnaires. While ALS feedback was noted on a Word document at the end of each session. Business2Business brokerage was conducted by the author on the projects, and feedback was collected at the end of each session and recorded on the consultancy support spreadsheets.

The ongoing data collection and the author’s closeness to it were extremely insightful and useful in informing the ongoing conversation with authorities and project officers. It aided reflexivity and triggered cause for evidence-based iteration of ongoing support to the businesses in collaboration with the authorities/officers. Further shaping the delivery of the projects and the contextualisation to support the case for developing alternative approaches to support the capacity building and market access for the ME-MSEs. Consequentially, contributed to the extension of all three projects from the initial contracted duration to at least double the time in all 3 projects. From 1 year to 2 years in Project One, 6 months to 13 months in Project Two, and 12 months in Project Three.

Furthermore, data was collected at the network events in Projects Two and Three. Project Two open discussion was chaired by the author. While combined Projects Two and Three network event was co-chaired with the author and co-consultant. Lastly, the author co-cited the evaluation report on Project One, which was published in June 2023. Also, significantly contributed data to the evaluation of Projects Two and Three through direct interviews of the author by the evaluator and indirectly through the author’s recorded participant feedback data.

By using a diversity of techniques, the study obtained rich and in-depth insight, including more nuanced and holistic knowledge of the research questions (J Brewer and A Hunter, 2006). Promoting deeper and more accurate analysis of the phenomena under investigation. To allow for comprehensive and reliable data (McLafferty, 2004). This was complemented by a synthesis of secondary data such as the authorities’ published strategic intent documents, procurement strategy, consultation results, published articles and other publicly available web-based information.

4.7 Data Sources Table

<i>Practitioner-Based Projects Primary sources</i>	<i>Collection Method/Storage</i>
One-to-one consultation	A comprehensive MS Excel spreadsheet was developed by the author to capture direct feedback after each session and recording of support hours. Additional feedback was received via email from some participants and copied into the comprehensive log.
Masterclasses (recorded sessions)	Questionnaires were developed by the author/project teams and used to collect feedback after each masterclass. Time was allowed for the completion of the form towards the session's end. This was transferred to MS Excel spreadsheet in Projects 2 & 3 and Google Sheets in Project 1.

Peer support networks	Feedback was captured at the end of each session and typed into the spreadsheets. Direct observation was conducted and noted on MS Word.
Business2Business brokerage	Feedback was captured at the end of each session and typed into the spreadsheets.
Action learning sets	Feedback was captured from each member at the end of each session and typed on the ALS summary document (MS Word) that each group received as the record of actions.
Focus groups	Direct observation by the author and note-taking onto an MS Word document.
Pre and Post-diagnostic assessment	Used Google Forms and Teams Forms to collect data and transfer to Google Sheets / MS spreadsheet.
Interview pitch & Conversational assessment	Direct observation during interview pitch and note-taking recorded in MS Excel to capture both financial and non-numeric data in Project 3
Network events	Note-taking on MS Word and direct observations
Secondary sources	
Evaluators reports	Documents interviews with the author, participants and project teams. Including a review of the primary data (1-1 and other sources) collected by the author and through various feedback.
Web-based documents and reports from the councils are listed in section 4.9 below.	Documents on consultation reports, procurement strategy reviewed with the input of participants in supplier diversity forum; equality & diversity ambition of the LBI and BC councils; employment, business & economic impact of Covid, Jobs and local economy evidence and statistics in Islington, Bristol One City Plan; report on the commission of race and ethnic disparities.
Some of the ARE web-based case studies	ARE programme case studies. https://actionforraceequality.org.uk/case-study-twipes/programme/ https://actionforraceequality.org.uk/case-study-divine-house-of-make-up/programme/ https://actionforraceequality.org.uk/enterprise-support-programme/action-learning-sets/
Some of the BSWN web-based case studies	BSWN evaluation report and case studies https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594948a7414fb5804d2b4395/t/64831df608d9bc2076b85063/1686314490869/BSWN MakeltWork report 2023 Final DIGITAL compressed.pdf https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594948a7414fb5804d2b4395/t/64831df608d9bc2076b85063/1686314490869/BSWN MakeltWork report 2023 Final DIGITAL compressed.pdf

4.8 Data Analysis (Framework)

The study employed thematic analysis as a data analytical tool. It has been described as a useful qualitative research instrument for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes or patterns within the qualitative data set (Braun et al., 2006). Arguably, an approach that is recognised as one of the most thoroughly delineated methods of conducting thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Despite this claim, some researchers have critiqued the approach as an ‘everything goes’ (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2002). Additionally, it is critiqued as a highly subjective form of content. However, counter-arguments have been presented by many researchers over several decades who acclaim it for the capability of complex data account and interpretation of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998), (M Vaismoradi, J Jones, H Turunen and S Snelgrove, 2016).

In this PhD study, the analytical process was cyclic without finite interpretation but rather a repeated return to data and the coding process throughout the process (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The reiterative method of theme development for each project followed the Braun & Clarke analytical stages detailed below. Through the process, the themes for each project were reviewed as independent topics in cognisance of the author’s potential subjectivity. The secondary data and literature review adopted the same analytical process to develop final themes. The analytical tables are detailed in Appendix 1-6 below.

A combined analytical table that comprised the nine wider literature, including the three closest literature and the three projects, was employed to conduct the final analysis for each research factor considered. These are illustrated in Chapter 5 on critical discussions. A structure is shown below, where the percentages represent the percentage count of the themes across the nine wider literature, the 3 closest literature and the 3 projects to determine consensus and gaps between research and practice (Goldfried, 2000).

Key Theme	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%	Closest Literature	%	Projects 1,2,3	%
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The analytical stages

1. Data Familiarisation

Data from numerous sources was downloaded into an MS Excel spreadsheet. Specifically, the data gathered from each activity (e.g., 1-1 consultation, masterclass,

B2B, ALS, network events, etc.) is listed in the above data sources table and documented in Volume One under each project. The author then immersed themselves in the data by reading, re-reading, and reviewing to understand the content thoroughly and to start noticing patterns and interesting features.

2. Generating Initial Codes

In this stage, the author began to organise data meaningfully and systematically. The coding involved identifying and labelling relevant information (including the use of colours) within the data. The numerous codes generated served as building blocks for the later analytical stages.

3. Generating Initial (Sub) Themes

The author then began to look for broader patterns or themes in the coded data. This involved examining the codes and considering how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme. This stage actively generated sub-themes, as illustrated in the Appendix.

4. Reviewing Themes

This stage involved refining and reviewing the themes generated. The author reviewed and checked if the themes accurately represented the data and if there was enough data to support each theme. At this stage, some themes were combined, split, or discarded.

5. Defining and Naming Themes

In this stage, the author further refined and defined the themes, identifying the essence of what each theme is about to develop and clearly define each key theme as illustrated in the Appendix.

6. Writing Up

As documented above, this chosen data-driven and systematic data cataloguing analytical approach helps frame the directly observable content from the portfolio of projects (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Similarly, the categorisation under themes derived from literature review and time-bound systematic review. Through the process, the author was cognisant of potential subjectivity by reviewing the themes for each project as independent topics, where, in truth, they are interconnected and critical to understanding the subject under investigation. Due attention was observed to keep the interpretation as close to the data as possible, and triangulation from more than one data source was achieved for most of the cause-and-effect relationships (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 1991). This included triangulating participants'

feedback on the same activities (e.g. ALS, B2B brokerage and peer network) but with different groups of participants to compare data. Also, triangulated data that had been collected using different tools (set questions, e.g., questionnaires and diagnostics; free-flow feedback, e.g., 1-1 feedback, group session feedback and case studies) to obtain a comprehensive view of the various activities. Data reported in evaluation reports, consultation reports that identified issues and recommendations documented in reports, strategic documents, and race & ethnic disparities reports are triangulated with participants' data on their experiences in barriers and enablers to capacity support and market access, data/direct quotes from council officers about their intentions for alternative approaches and direct observations by the author.

Thus, the triangulation of the projects' findings and secondary data enabled a reflexive medley of a spectrum of market support activities within the chosen case-studied organisations. This led to the final stage, the interpretive phase, weaving together the analysis and allowing a coherent multi-dimensional discussion to answer the research questions below, as documented in Chapter 5 of this volume. This led to the connectivity of units and the construction of emergent conceptual frameworks.

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

It's important to note that while these stages are presented sequentially, the thematic analysis was an iterative process. The author found themselves moving back and forth between stages as their understanding of the data deepened. In keeping with Braun and Clarke's emphasis that the approach is reflexive, the author, as a researcher, was an active participant in constructing meaning from the data rather than simply uncovering preexisting themes. This reflexivity involved being conscious of the author's own biases and assumptions throughout the analysis process.

4.9 Ethical Considerations, Limitations and Potential Concerns

4.9.1 Ethical considerations

To uphold ethical conduct (Northouse, 2013), anonymity was chosen for all ME-MSE actors who took part in the projects to protect their identity (USW Guide to Ethical Report, 2019). The author, from a moral and professional standpoint, obtained support

letters from the infrastructure organisations that were commissioned by the local authorities which is included in Volume One of this study. All participants in the Council-funded projects delivered through ARE and BSWN completed consent forms for sharing data and insights as seen on the ARE and BSWN websites. Secondary data were obtained from publicly available documents and materials on the local authorities' website, ARE and BSWN websites and other legitimate websites such as government (.gov) sites as detailed below. The evaluation report from Project One has been published and is widely available. Unlike the report for projects two and three which has not been published. However, across all projects, the study has not included any known sensitive materials.

4.9.2 List of web-based documents and reports

<https://www.corecities.com/our-cities/bristol>

<https://www.bristolonecity.com/about-the-one-city-plan/>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/3195-bcc-sme-concordat-0/file>

<https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org/make-it-work>

<https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org/blog/miw-report-launch>

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity>

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/islington-evidence-and-statistics/jobs-and-local-economy-evidence-and-statistics>

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/business/support-information-for-business/business-recovery-programme>

<https://democracy.islington.gov.uk/documents/s28415/Final%20Report%20-%20Employment%20Business%20Economy%20Council%20Finances.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>

<https://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/enterprise-support-programme/>

<https://www.actionforraceequality.org.uk/islington-entrepreneurs/>

4.9.3 Limitations and potential concerns

This empirical study is approached inductively from an interpretivist philosophical viewpoint. Recognising that, ontologically, reality is not fixed but intersubjective and

requires real-life interactions to truly understand social constructs (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Yin (1994 & 2009) argues the appropriateness of employing an exploratory qualitative research design for studying complex phenomena about which knowledge is relatively little. Despite, the critiques of qualitative inquiry reliability, particularly regarding the use of case studies, some researchers have responded to the criticism of lacking reliable information as misleading (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Their study further explicated the approach as suitable for developing a wealth of data and nuanced insights in the study of complex phenomena. Aiding a comprehensive understanding of complex issues in their natural settings as observed in this PhD study. Admittedly, the UK lags behind the US, where government programs began in 1967 with legislative authorisation for the US Small Business Association (SBA) to use the assisted procurement process to support socially or economically disadvantaged businesses (Shelton et al., 2018). The UK procurement programme initiatives are several decades behind as highlighted by the recent Covid-19 pandemic, with gaps between buyers' capability (public authorities) to deliver best-fit services to the community (minoritised people) in the absence of supplier diversity (Olarewaju et al., 2023).

4.9.4 Further studies

Nonetheless, the author recognises the limitations of a case study qualitative study, particularly for generalizability. Despite that, researchers have argued its benefits and role, particularly in human learning and its wealth of details and development of a nuanced view of reality (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Nevertheless, two case-studied entities are public sector organisations, and future studies in the UK could test the model in private corporation procurement opportunities which might present valuable insights into the private-market generalizability. However, the rich knowledge and layered conceptual framework could present a case for private-market transferability (K Vasileiou, J Barnett, S Thorpe and T Young, 2018, p. 14). Defined as '*the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts*' (Anney, 2014, p. 277). Allowing them to make connections between elements of the study and their own experiences. For further insight into generalizability or not from public-market procurement.

Chapter Five – The Discussion and Contribution

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study will discuss the theoretical contributions to the field. It specifically documents the four key contributions to the core extant literature on procurement initiatives and asset-based community development that underpin the study. Equally, it specifically documents the broader contributions deduced from the thesis-informed novel theoretical framework by engaging with broader literature and debates on relationship typology, business support and enterprise policy. A summary of the practitioner-based projects and the research objectives are documented in keeping a focused view of the research purpose. The chapter also documents the first-hand practitioner reflection.

5.2 Project Portfolio Recap

In volume one, the author presented the three projects. These included:

5.2.1 Project One: Make It Work (MIW) Programme

A Southwest England-based ‘test and learn’ project to strategically support Bristol City Council’s aim of better social care outcomes for citizens from Black, Asian and Minoritised (BAM) communities by diversifying its supply chain through capacity building BAM organisations to enter into the Adult Social Care (ASC) market. Also, more broadly, to aid the business development and sustainability of BAM businesses.

5.2.2 Project Two: Enterprise Support (ES) Programme

A Southeast England-based ‘tailored’ project to deliver the council’s strategic objectives to support business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds to build their resilience and capacity. To keep their businesses running and to equip them to strategically navigate the enterprise landscape in the UK.

5.2.3 Project Three: Inclusive Entrepreneurship (IE) Programme

A Southeast England-based project to provide ‘blended’ support to early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly those from BAME backgrounds, as well as female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs with disability, to help address disproportionate and significant barriers to success, including difficulty securing finance from banks and finding it harder to access business support. By providing tailored support to access

grants (seed funding) to kick start their ideas and business support to grow and sustain their businesses and create local employment.

5.2.4 The Connection of the Projects

All three projects were spurred by the dynamic changes invoked by Covid-19. The realisation of the disproportionate representation of minoritized businesses in the supplier chain or market success. Yet a community that displayed ingenuity during the pandemic to reach and support their local community (Korede et al., 2023). Conversely, a significantly challenging task for the authorities (Olawaju et al., 2023). Hence, a propellant to engage with the ethnic community leaders to enhance community participation in service delivery (Mahmood et al., 2021). Consequentially, it became a catalyst for the exploration of market access and supplier diversity initiatives and associated enablers.

The connectivity of these unique projects was identified. Specifically, as the capacity building of Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises (MEMSEs) into market access and sustainable growth through the model of asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration between the community (MEMSEs) and the authority (commissioners). This uniquely connects the three projects. To promote and facilitate productive, relatable, and meaningful engagement and resultant outcomes, namely organisational development and better access to opportunities for sustainable growth of the entity (MEMSEs).

5.2.5 The Research Objectives

Therefore, this chapter of the doctoral study will engage the criticality of theoretical insight gained combined with the practical revelation from the three unique projects to contribute unique knowledge to the field by answering the research questions:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

5.3 First-Hand Practitioner's Reflection

5.3.1 *The Community and the Reality of Distrust*

The author's field experience of nearly 20 years in enterprise support and stakeholder engagement informed their initial engagement strategy. Expressly, relationship building is congruent with the extant literature and provides grounding to this study (Harrison et al., 2019). Therefore, the author's relationship-building across all three projects was paramount. As a person from the community of identity as the local businesses, the propensity for engagement was expected to be easier. As supported by some of the articles which underpinned the theoretical insight.

“Co-ethnic relationships often feature smoother communication and a higher sense of loyalty and friendship because of shared cultural backgrounds and common languages (Pan et al., 2022).”

“Minorities are more likely than non-minorities to seek homophilic relationships (Pan et al., 2022).”

“Minority Ethnics (MEs) may choose to participate in preferred procurement programs because they see others who look like them (Shelton et al., 2018).”

Conversely, there was a level of divergence between reality and expectations. Ensued by the distrust of the authorities by the community. Causing the EMBs to question the likelihood of the author's role in facilitating change. Which posed a challenge to the author, particularly on projects one and two. Understandably, both projects were new initiatives commissioned by the authorities through ethnic-led infrastructure organisations to encourage participation. While increased awareness had taken root by the launch of Project Three. Howbeit, the tone of initial distrust was still evident.

Project One

“I have been asking them to support but they never listen.”

“We've been there before, nothing changes.”

“We are just going round and round with them.”

Project Two

“I don't want to waste my time.”

“I don't need business support, I need access to funding.”

Project Three

“We are often overlooked.”

“We are being treated like the big business.”

Invariably, this necessitates deepening relationships through trust-building by sharing the author’s experiences of influencing socio-economic change, career journey and successes. However, not enough to engender enough trust in the authorities until practical ongoing meaningful engagements were facilitated and built upon.

5.3.2 The Authority and Tension between the ‘Why’ and ‘How’

Expectedly, the relationship building between the author and the authorities was equally paramount and of greater necessity to stimulate change. However, the author initially encountered complexity in building relationships. Thwarted by the disconnect between procurement and commissioning officers’ views of the market. Procurement is fundamentally steeped in contracting rules and regulations whilst commissioners are absorbed in delivery capacity and service provision. Despite equally desiring to meet the strategic intent of increased supplier diversity to enhance the economic prosperity of ethnic-led businesses and better outcomes for citizens (the why). To bridge the tension between the conflicting perspectives, that is, the ‘why’ (strategic intent) and the ‘how’ (operational implementation) divergent from the traditional ways of doing things was unavoidable. The author had to navigate trust building between themselves and the two lenses of the authorities. This was evident in Project One.

Similarly, on projects two and three, particularly project two, being it’s the first of the Authority/Infrastructure Organisation (ARE) strategic partnership programme. Calling for relationship building during the initial few months through knowledge and intelligence exchange, and weekly updates between the ARE team and the authority’s strategic/programme leads. To bridge the tension between the ‘why’ (strategic intent), that is the council’s aim to address the impact of the pandemic on borough-based Black, Asian minority-owned businesses and start-ups as part of the council’s business recovery programme following the pandemic and the ‘how’ (operational implementation) by the project team with contextual knowledge often divergent from the authority’s traditional approach.

In all three projects, similar to the community, deepening relationships through repeated and meaningful engagement, listening and intelligence sharing mattered.

Thus, catalysing the exploration of possibilities to open up opportunities to test and learn, thinking outside the box, considering alternative ways, piloting, etc. which led to successful outcomes. Invariably contributing unique knowledge to the field of public sector market support and access for MSE-EMBs to participate in market opportunities and sustain market growth.

5.4 Model of Critical Discussion

The critical analysis of the findings in practice and the extant literature is examined in this section. Supportive descriptive quotes for each of the three emerging themes are constructed in the combined theoretical and empirical analytical data tables shown in Appendices 1 to 4 below. Detailing the fit of themes from critiqued theory to evidenced themes that emerged from practice across the three projects. A systematic approach is engaged in constructing the theoretical and conceptual frameworks to be critically discussed. Culminating in the construction of a novel conceptual framework that addresses the research gap and uniquely contributes to knowledge in the field.

5.4.1 The Overview of Criticality

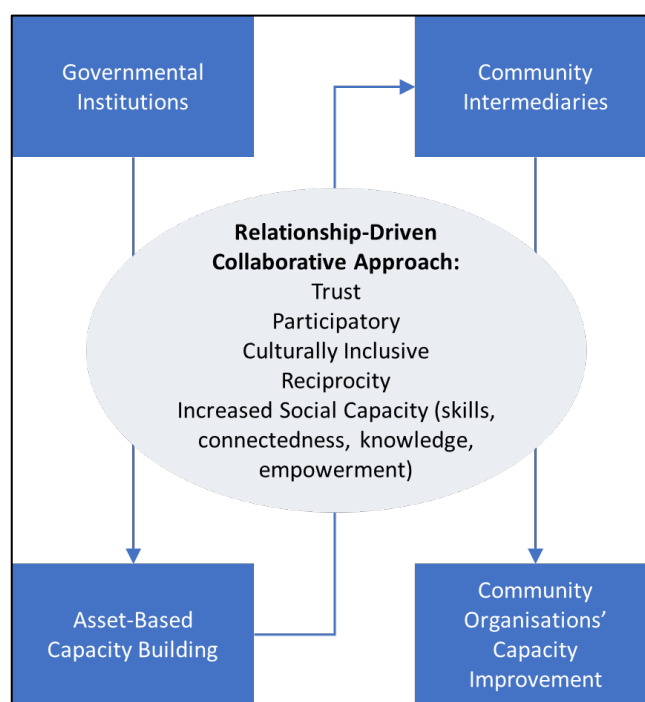
Pretorious & Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) asset-based community development (ABCD) papers provided preliminary grounding to the thesis to understand the notion of these businesses as local assets and highlight the importance of utilising local assets as key resources in tackling socio-economic inequalities. The studies purport a trust-based participatory relationship-driven approach to ABCD and its utilisation to support marginalised and/or disadvantaged community members to drive the future of their own development and move away from the dependency model. However, the relationship types to drive sustainable change remain unknown creating a gap (Harrison et al., 2019). The thesis-informed-novel-theoretical-framework illustrated in section 3.7 above addresses this gap.

Furthermore, the in-depth literature review on procurement initiatives, particularly the research conducted in the UK by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) and in the US by Shelton et al., (2018) and Pan et al., (2022), has uncovered approaches to supporting capacity building of EMBs. The studies revealed approaches to enabling their engagement in public sector market support and access to afford them the opportunity for contract or grant awards.

Therefore, this chapter of the doctoral study will engage the criticality of theoretical insight gained combined with the practical revelation from the three unique projects to contribute unique knowledge to the field by answering the research questions. The criticality will initially focus on the literature on asset-based community development (ABCD) that contributed preliminary grounding to the study. This will be followed by the procurement literature criticality and, ultimately, the wider literature criticality.

5.4.2 The Asset-Based Notion

To enable a systemic approach to the study and a route map, the author established a fundamental grounding for knowledge on asset-based community development. In particular, the studies by Pretorius and Nel (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) are examined, amongst others, as detailed in the literature review section. The review of the extant literature informed the development of the preliminary conceptual framework, which, as illustrated in the literature chapter and shown below, grounded the rest of the study.



The preliminary conceptual framework for an asset-based collaborative approach. Developed by the author as illustrated on page 42 in the literature review chapter.

Examining the fit between theory and practice, the asset-based approach to community development described by Pretorius and Nel (2012), unlike the problem-based approach described by Brueggemann, (2006), focuses on the strength of the

community to build its capacity. Congruent with the three projects where participants/businesses are locally based (Harrison et al., 2019) and closely connected to the community in need of service improvement and/or sector at risk in need of improved capacity (Bruursema 2015). A connectivity birthed from a shared sense of identity and past experiences (Bruursema 2015). As explicated by participants’ quotes of the author’s first-hand reflection in section 5.3 above. Resulting in the development of relationships and social capital due to shared life experiences (Harrison et al., 2019).

Therefore, prime local-based assets to engage, empower and mobilise into action (Harrison et al., 2019). Across the three projects to reveal practical insights and new knowledge. Supported by the pre-diagnostic assessment results on all three projects.

On project one, a significant 90%, as shown below, had mid-to-high knowledge of their community’s service users’ needs. Similarly, 50% of the participants (minoritised organisations) expressed that they are currently in a position to bid for adult social care contracts. However, a greater proportion are not currently bidding due to systemic constraints (Hossain et al., 2022).

Current Knowledge of Adult Social Care Services, Business & Finance	% Low rating	% Mid rating	% High rating
How well do you know your users and the needs of your community?	10%	40%	50%

Table 01: Participants’ business readiness knowledge rating pre-support

Current adult social care status	Yes	No
Are you currently in a position to bid for Adult Social Care Contracts?	7	7
Are you currently bidding for Adult Social Care Contracts?	3	8

Table 02: Participants’ market sector knowledge rating pre-support

Likewise, on projects two and three, the council’s intent of the Business Recovery Programme is to enable the revival of the high streets through locally led initiatives and targeted grant schemes for the most at-risk, such as hospitality businesses.

All 11 established businesses on Project Two were trading in the services sector. With 55% in retail and 45% in hospital/professional services. Additionally, with trading

experience from over 3 years to over 14 years. The majority of them were face-to-face trades and disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as shown in the table below. Making them prime local assets for the new partnership approach and culturally tailored support the council aimed to deliver to enable their survival and entrepreneurial growth.

Established businesses sector and trade location	Result
Services sector (retail, hospitality & professional services)	100%
Face-to-face trade (shop front – 45% & shared community space – 27%)	72%
Online trade	27%

Table 03: Participants’ business sector and trade location

Impact of Covid-19 on businesses	Result
Negative impact on trade and income	73%
Positive impact on trade and income	18%
Mixed impact on trade and income	9%

Table 04: Participants’ Covid-19 impact on trading income

Lastly, on project three, all 17 businesses were newly set up/early-stage trading in the services sector. With 53% in retail and 47% in professional services. The majority of whom were face-to-face trades. Trading experience ranged from new to under 2 years, in line with the eligibility criteria. Again, prime local assets for the innovative support approach the council aimed to deliver and gain insight. Additionally, as reported by the Council’s Inclusive Economy & Jobs unit pre-pandemic, many residents were running small and micro businesses in sectors like fashion, retail, leisure and hospitality. <https://democracy.islington.gov.uk/documents/s28415/Final%20Report%20-%20Employment%20Business%20Economy%20Council%20Finances.pdf>.

Majority of whom were reported as already pessimistic about their long-term viability. These businesses were reported as disproportionately in the ownership of women and people from BAME communities. The critical analysis of the participating organisations’ pre-diagnostic assessment demographics concurred with the Council’s report, as shown below.

Early-stage businesses sector and trade location	Result
Services sector (retail, hospitality & professional services)	100%
Offline/face-to-face	76%
Online trade platform	24%

Table 05: Participants’ business sector and trade location

Demographics of business owners	Result
BAME	94%
Female owned	82%
People with disability	41%
Intersectionality (BAME, Female and Disabled)	29%

Table 06: Participants’ demographics

All three initiatives were commissioned through community infrastructure organisations, otherwise known as intermediaries (Pretorius et al., 2012). As trusted organisations to bridge the distrust between governmental institutions and community organisations (Bruursema, 2015, Harrison et al., 2019). Engendering trust-based relationships and rapport by virtue of community-shared values (Harrison et al., 2019). Additionally, asset-based approaches researchers place significant value on the whole ecosystem of the community, including the cultural assets (Pretorius et al., 2012). Congruent with the activation of the project through ethnic-led infrastructure organisations. Promoting motivation amongst the communities, known to seek homophilic relationships to connect (Bruursema, 2015). A move towards building social capital (trust-based relationships, connectedness and networks) (Pretorius et al., 2012). Reflected in the level of interest and enrolment of participants in all three projects, as shown below.

Project	Target	Actual
Project One - MIW	10	22
Project Two - IES	10	12
Project Three - IEP	15	17

Table 07: Participants’ recruitment outputs

Invariably encouraging community organisations’ participatory and reciprocal disposition (Pretorius et al., 2012). In a quest to influence change as they work together collaboratively towards the projects’ strategic objectives and associated learning (Bruursema, 2015). Employing the simple social thinking methodology to engage the community naturally (Pretorius et al., 2012). Unlike conventional rational problem-solving, which is complex (Brueggemann, 2006). Mandating an instrumental role for the author in bridging a highly bureaucratic regulatory system created by the public sector market (Harrison et al., 2019). By employing the narrative ‘test and learn’ in the case of the Bristol project and ‘tailored’ and ‘innovative’ in the case of London projects. Not unitarily but in conjunction with relationship building to challenge the existing power structure (Bruursema, 2015). Postulated as an asset-based collaborative approach (Harrison et al., 2019) and a change vehicle within disadvantaged populations. Supported by quotes from the councils to include themes as tabled below.

Projects	Collaboration	Locally Based	Change-Mechanism	Disadvantage
One	Working together Holistic service Working closely with local communities	Locality-based. Delivered by local people. Micro-providers Local communities close to their neighbours.	Holistic service Mechanisms designed to increase numbers	Individuals /micros not getting as much opportunity, perhaps as they should have been
Two	Partnered with. Working closely.	Islington-based race equality charity. Ethnic owned businesses in the borough.	Culturally tailored to support local BAME.	Face many challenges. Unique barriers.
Three	Partnership with BTEG. Share our determination.	Local communities. Talented people, BAME with great ideas and big ambitions.	1 st for the council. Help communities build back differently Innovative approach. Extra support in a changing world	Address inequality. Additional barriers compared to entrepreneurs as a whole

Table 08: Project featured themes of an asset-based collaborative model

Project one

“We are looking at working together so that some people [minoritized organisations] can do more than one thing and actually deliver a combined holistic service.”

“Those are what we call locality-based workstreams. So, a thing called Individual Service Funds, Care Introductory Agencies, they are all mechanisms we are going to use going forward to ensure that our services are delivered on behalf of local people, to local people, quite often by local people. [...] People who were what we call micro providers, so individuals who perhaps might be counsellors, therapists or self-employed care workers who are looking to work in their community but weren’t getting as much opportunity perhaps as they should have been. All those mechanisms are designed to increase those numbers of people and designed to support those people who are looking to work more closely with their neighbours and their local communities.”

Projects two and three

Business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority ethnic backgrounds face many challenges in keeping their businesses running and in strategically navigating the enterprise landscape in the UK. Islington Council recognises these unique barriers and is working closely with Action for Race Equality to provide culturally tailored support for Black, Asian and Minority ethnic owned businesses in the borough.

“We have partnered with BTEG to manage the programme on our behalf because we know they share our determination to address this inequality and help our communities build back differently in the midst of the pandemic.”

The partnership with Islington-based race equality charity Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) is another first for the council, as it helps its communities to build back differently amid the coronavirus pandemic, creating stronger, more equal and inclusive local economies.”

Cllr Asima Shaikh, Islington Council’s Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs, said: “Many talented people in our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities have great ideas and big ambitions for their own businesses but face additional barriers getting them off the ground compared to entrepreneurs as a whole. Many need extra support in a changing world.”

In summary, there is a close fit between the insight gained from the extant literature and practical knowledge in the asset-based collaborative approach to addressing community capacity improvement. It has provided rich insight into the model as a strength-based collaboration and shared value trust-based relationship-building model. Therefore, the insight gained serves as a grounding for the rest of this doctoral

study. However, there are gaps in knowledge that this doctoral study will contribute to by exploring best practice models and emergent properties of relationship building (Pan et al., 2019). In essence, the relationship model that will facilitate sustainable economic changes through capacity-building and support for market access of the study phenomenon to answer the research questions.

5.4.3 The Business Support Approaches

The unprecedented challenges during the pandemic paved the way for increased emergent support groups (Harris, 2021). Likewise, business innovation and development (Lounsbury et al., 2019, Lassalle et al., 2018). Particularly stimulated by the support of ethnic-led intermediary community organisations acting as the bridge between the community and commissioners (Mahmood et al., 2021). Spotlighting the ingenuity and social power of the community organisations as local assets. Invariably fostering an appetite for dialogue and conversations on mechanisms of change, as explicated in the section above (Macmillan, 2020a). To aid the authorities' strategic intent delivery. Causing the authorities to pull together with the local assets to envision a common goal (Gruidl et al., 2014). Supported by quotes from the authorities.

So, it is about saying to the individual, have a think about what you want to achieve and who you want to achieve it with, and we will do all in our power to make sure there is a supply of those care providers, whether that be individuals or smaller organisations who can then give you the kind of support you need.”

“We have partnered with BTEG to manage the programme on our behalf because we know they share our determination to address this [unique barriers] inequality.”

Aided by the authorities' intent to explore better ways of engagement (Bates et al., 2022). Additionally, best-fit market support that is targeted at minoritised community organisations (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). To improve opportunity access (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022) and growth (Bates et al., 2022). Impacting local citizens and local economies. Supported by the below quotes from the authorities.

“We have large numbers of people from BME communities who want support from within their own culture, from within their own community but there is a lack of providers [on the traditional local framework] and a lack of individuals [formally employed in the ASC market] who can actually offer that culturally appropriate support. [...]”

“The Adult Social Care budget in our council is more than half of the council’s basic budget. [...] That’s a lot of money for people to be earning and economic multipliers. I was inspired by the [organisation name] people because some of the people that work for them, they didn’t think that they could work. [...] They didn’t think that care work was for them and then all of a sudden, they’re in established roles. They’re doing work, earning money.”

Cllr Asima Shaikh, Islington Council’s Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs, said: “Many talented people in our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities have great ideas and big ambitions for their own businesses, but face additional barriers getting them off the ground compared to entrepreneurs as a whole. Many need extra support in a changing world. [...] This programme will provide the expert advice and seed funding our underrepresented communities need to make lasting success a realistic goal, helping new businesses to grow – and, in turn, creating jobs for local people and feeding the Islington economy.”

Trust and relationship-building supportive quotes

Admittedly, the authorities' strategic intent (i.e. the why) is clear. However, the 'what' factors for engagement participation in the business support offer to EMBs are critical. The findings from the literature highlight trust-based relationships as fundamental to business support engagement (Ram, 2019, Hossain et al., 2022, Pan et al., 2022). A 75% consensus of the combined literature and 100% of the closet literature posited relationship building as an enabler to engagement. Equally important is trust. As postulated by Hossain et al., (2022) as a key factor for EMBs in seeking external support. However, consensually lower percentages at 50% and 67% compared to relationships. Highlighting the value of the involvement of trusted community organisers (Ram, 2019). Having shared cultural norms, values, and common languages (Haq et al., 2021, Pan et al., 2022). Supported by EMBs' quotes.

“The trust of having someone that looks like you providing this consultation and feeling you are not going to be judged and you can easily communicate your challenges.” [P2]

Congruent with Pan et al., (2022), who posited that co-ethnic relationships often feature smoother communication. Elucidating Haq et al., (2021) assertion of co-ethnic relationships increases the natural communication flow and a greater sense of loyalty and friendship. Not surprisingly, the evidence in practice from the three projects shows a 100% consensus on trust and relationships.

“Ways to overcome barriers is strategic liaison between council officers and community organisations, building relationships and trust” [P1]

“Cultural appropriate consultants/team were necessary to build trust” [P3]

A trust-based relationship with the author and the ethnic-led infrastructure organisations was solidified. Activated by cultural inclusion in business support as quoted above (Ram, 2019). Congruent with Shelton et al., (2018) that minority ethnic determinants of procurement programme participation may be subject to seeing people that look like them. Concurred with quotes from participant feedback:

Cultural inclusion supportive quotes

[P1]

"I like the fact that you are black as well. Am glad."

"It is a very comforting environment; it's been easy to speak to you and BSWN members."

"There are not enough black providers. The absence of black providers is a shame. Service users don't get culturally appropriate services. Most providers don't know what culture sensitivity is."

[P2]

"The programme made a difference because of the importance of having a BAME consultant to support my business as a black woman to fill educational gaps."

"There is value in BAME consultant because it means that you are better understood in a world of business where there may be obstacles standing in your way in finding funding opportunities and business development support."

"Having BAME consultant means that the consultant can relate to the BAME-led business in regard to any experiences that they have had in the business world to tackle obstacles."

[P3]

"Cultural appropriateness is important because consultants and project team are easier to relate to which is important when receiving support"

"I have various struggles and I feel like finally something catered to my needs, I felt welcome comfortable and safe which is very important."

"Tutu's understanding of our BAME community and who we work with, made a real difference. We were able to connect with Tutu as we could relate to her and she understood a lot of the issues impacting the community of women we are trying to support without us having to educate or explain."

"Tutu, she is a role model to me."

However, aside from culturally inclusive business support (skills in business planning, management, human resources, etc.) and exposure to procurement platforms provided by the author. A range of technical support (grant or tender specifications, application requirements, pricing, etc.) was required (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, De Armanios et al., 2017). Hence, non-homophilic relationships with authorities were equally important (Shelton et al., 2018). Their study postulated the importance of establishing exchange relationships for opportunities. Additionally, engaging in co-ethnic peer-to-peer support (Pan et al., 2022) or action learning sets (Ram, 2019). On the contrary, through network opportunities (Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Especially as relationship building outside of the established homophilic one is vital, particularly for a community that has experienced social exclusion (Shelton et al., 2018, Bates et al., 2018). Supported by a 100% consensus from the combined and closest literature and congruent with the projects at an equal 100% consensus as an enabler to support engagement. Similarly, a 100% consensus was delivered by the three projects on peer learning support as quoted below. Contrary to the combined literature at 38% and the closest literature at 33%. Resulting in a knowledge gap which this study contributes to in the later part of this chapter. A support defined by Ram (2019) as 'Action Learning Sets' fostering self-reflection and re-evaluation of business goals. A peer assistance platform for co-sharing knowledge on dealing with challenges encountered in business opportunities and access to large corporations (Pan et al., 2022). As was evidenced by quotes below from EMBs as giving them opportunities to see those who like them succeeding (Shelton et al., 2018). Additionally, valuing role models as quoted below. Congruent with Pan et al., (2022), who highlighted the value of role models in sharing success stories and best practices. However, as support deepened, so did the desire for an extended peer support network, as quoted below.

Peer learning/Action learning support (ALS)

[P1]

"The Housing Peer Learning was very useful."

"I want to be part of the following peer support - BCC pre-tender support/CSS framework and housing strategy/commissioning intention."

"I want to be part of the following external support network - financial management and scaling; and marketing."

[P2]

"Exploration through peer network added value to my business because it gave me ideas on what I need to do to boost my company, speaking out, more insights into what I could do, scaling up and even doing tutorials on YouTube."

"It made me see some other businesses' perspectives. Being in your own business, sometimes you don't see what other people see."

"The sessions gave me insight into what other businesses are doing and what I could do better as a small business."

"Overall, ALS gave me ideas from other people and businesses, the challenges they were facing and how I can prevent facing such challenges."

[P3]

"I find ALS interesting as a way of solving mutual problems."

"This (ALS) is really powerful, to get so many people (peers) in a room is really hard. Helped me think outside the box."

"ALS, absolutely a wonderful session. It's like market research in a safe environment. I have learned so much and I am so grateful. All these things [...] I am taking away, and I am so excited."

"It (ALS) has been really helpful, as you say, it's in a safe space. When the business is all on your shoulders, [.....]. Lots of things for me to work on."

"I feel great. I understand what I have overlooked in terms of social media. I also understand that there are things I had missed that I am going to go back on. I feel really good"

Network support supportive quotes

[P1]

"The most valuable part of the programme has been the mentoring, accessing new opportunities, and networking... Tutu has been amazing, she's created a safe space where I can be heard!"

"I want to network and speak to people. It gives me more confidence."

"I am involved in a network of property investors – X Gateway"

"The network is important and identifying the different types of networks to support (emotional, business, research, etc)."

[P2]

"Networking with other businesses made a difference on the programme"

"Networking to discuss and explore ideas made a difference to my business. Even listening to start-up businesses."

"Great to see so many black and minority businesses at the in-person event. It was easier to open up."

[P3]

The in-person network event with Islington Council in September explored linkages with agencies and other support available, with practical suggestions about Council services, networks and other support. This was valued."

According to Ram (2019), business support programmes targeted at minority businesses require contextualisation to meet needs. Elucidating the need for differential support targeted at their unique needs (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, De Armanios et al., 2017). Congruent with quotes from the authorities.

"Business owners from BAME backgrounds face many challenges in keeping their businesses running and in strategically navigating the enterprise landscape in the UK. Islington Council recognises these unique barriers [.....]." "We have partnered with BTEG to manage the programme on our behalf because we know they share our determination to address this inequality [.....]."

"People who were what we call micro providers, so individuals who perhaps might be counsellors, therapists or self-employed care workers who are looking to work in their community but weren't getting as much opportunity perhaps as they should have been. All those mechanisms are designed to increase those numbers of people and designed to support those people who are looking to work more closely with their neighbours and their local communities."

Thus, demanding equitability using individualisation and contextualisation. Reported in the study by Shelton et al., (2018) as a call for well-designed and contextualised support initiatives. As explicated by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) as customised, tailored and supportive-themed workshops. De Armanios et al., (2017) congruently asserted that tailored consultancy support, diagnostic, and one-to-one sessions to clarify issues of concern in tendering processes and requirements. Further posited by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) as up to 20 hours of personalised one-to-one firm-specific intensive business support. These findings are congruently evident in the three projects on activities through themed workshops, peer learning/ALS, one-to-one intensive and personalised business mentoring and capacity support. The range of contextualised market readiness support areas is illustrated in Figures 12, 13 and 14 below.

Impact of contextualised support

Project One: a significant increase in knowledge rating in technical, business, systems, financial, communication and networking/peer learning from pre- to post-support.

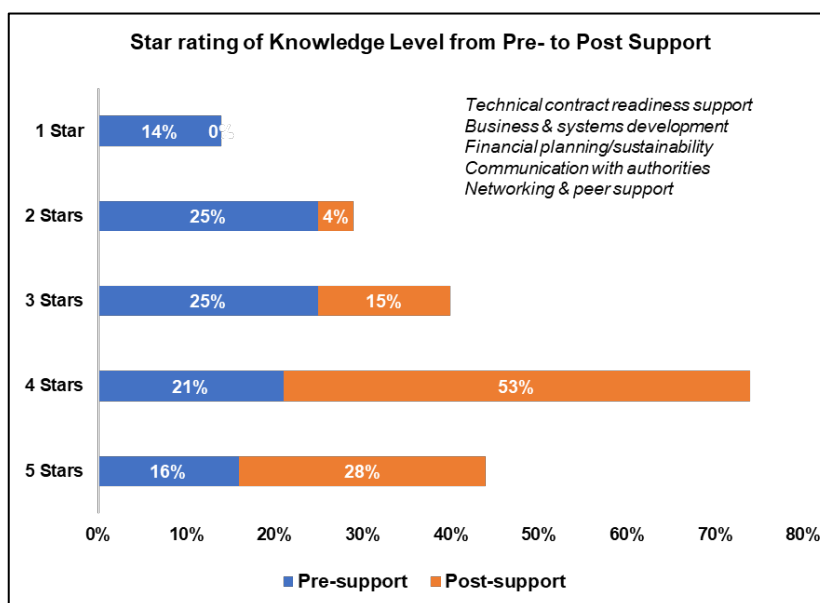


Figure 012: Project one participant knowledge outcomes

Project Two: 89% of the participants benefited from market readiness product knowledge including a comprehensive business plan, financial plan, marketing & communication, policy development, procurement platform support and general business matters.

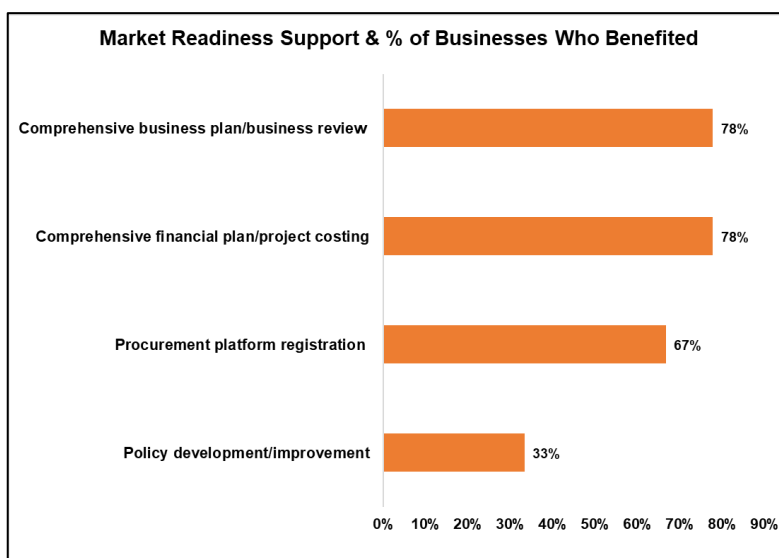


Figure 013: Project two product knowledge beneficiaries

Project Three: 93% of the participants benefited from market readiness support product knowledge including comprehensive business plan, financial plan, administrative toolkit and systems, market engagement and procurement/grant sourcing.

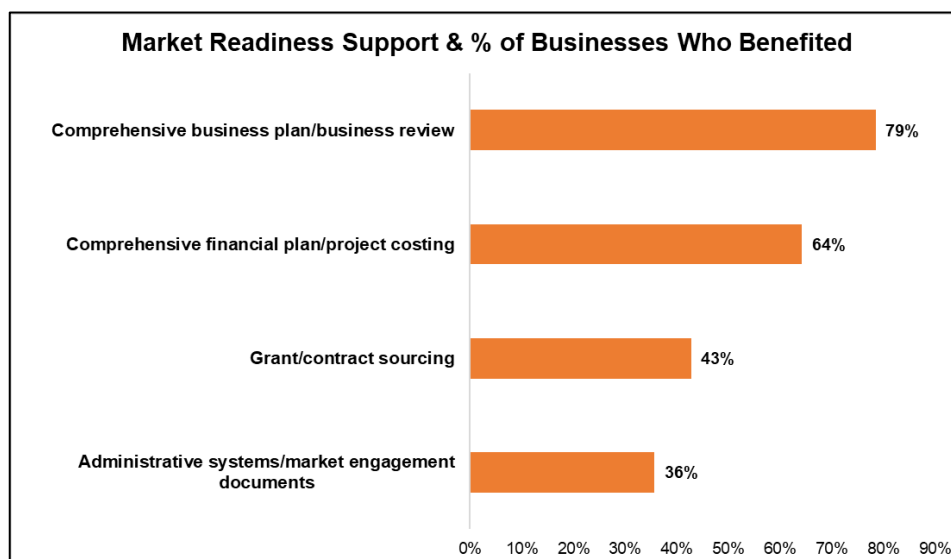


Figure 014: Project three product knowledge beneficiaries

Additionally, supportive quotes on personalised one-to-one support are detailed below.

Project One delivered over 255 hours to an average of 14 fully engaged participants over the 2 years. Equating to over 18 hours of personalised support per person. Additionally, 17 themed supports through 6 supportive-themed masterclasses and 11 supportive-themed peer learning support. This makes up for more than the 2 hours short of the Woldesenbet et al., (2018) suggested personalised support hours where each engaged participant attended at least 3 of the 90 to 120-minute sessions.

Personalised one-to-one supportive quotes

[P1]

"It was really nice to talk to you and bridge that into learning opportunity. The opportunity will help us obtain real data within marginalised groups."

"Really appreciate this one-to-one because it allows for personal reflection, and I would recommend it!"

"Really happy on the clarity on CSS pricing/finance."

"Session was good, thank you so much for helping with the application form on pro-contract"

"Useful to have these sessions after the workshop and clarify things that happened."

"Conversations like this is good, so I can personalise the programme and talk about how it is advancing my journey."

"Very good session, very informative, you have given us space to come up with our thoughts and ideas. Also, navigating a website isn't that easy e.g. framework weblinks and intelligence is not easy to get. This is really helpful and outlining the landscape."

"I can't tell you how refreshing it is to have access to you and your knowledge."

"By the end of this month (Oct), I should be able to complete the framework. Your sessions have been very informative, grasped knowledge of age difference which is really helpful because I was unsure of the age group."

Project Two received over 226 hours of personalised one-to-one support. An average of approximately 25 hours per organisation, equivalent to just about 3.5 days each for the 9 fully engaged participants. Additionally, 9 themed supports through 4 supportive-themed masterclasses and 5 themed peer learning support. As well as 3 themed guidebooks created by the author as downloadable resource materials.

[P2]

"I feel you have been incredibly thorough and opened my eyes to a whole new world. Very informative and supportive in terms of guidance and very structured."

"You helped me come up with ideas. I look forward to our next session. Business strategic planning – now I have something to think about and research and go from there."

"Having one-to-one consultancy was good"

"One-to-one on improvement and support which led to the refinement of our branding and proposal documentation."

"Business Planning and Strategising - we had to change strategies including financial reviews."

Today's session was really productive and useful. Tutu went through Proactis and a potential contract with X Council. Some insight into opportunities I was not aware of."

"4Ps (price/product): the support on how to calculate the unit cost of my products and the profit margins was beneficial and informative."

"It has been a good experience for us, 10 years in business but this gives us a new way to do business, am learning so much from these sessions."

"Both the CIC set up and the policy development were new areas to me. Therefore, my level would be "2" for all the areas where I initially felt I was 4 or 5. I would now say I am "4" with more to learn."

"Your confidence makes me feel confident as we went through the opportunity portals."

"Informative session on the register on the Proactis portal and the opportunities there; all new to me"

"A good session on proactis and how to find relevant opportunities."

"It was good to have a review of Proactis and look through how best to search for opportunities."

Project Three received over 298 hours of personalised one-to-one culturally appropriate support from the author. An average of approximately 23 hours per organisation, equivalent to just under 3.5 days each for the 13 fully engaged participants. Additionally, 8 themed supports through 3 supportive-themed masterclasses and 5 themed peer learning support. As well as one downloadable supportive-themed guidebook created by the author.

[P3]

"Consultancy support is beneficial as it allows me to bounce ideas in a safe space. It is here where I am able to learn, grow and question openly."

"When they said we had funding and one-to-one consultancy, the consultancy support was really what I felt would be really valuable to me. I am really grateful to have had the conversation with you today. Things will only get convoluted as we progress the business, so am grateful to have your support."

"Knowing am disorganised, to have someone who knows their stuff to have a structure in place. Also, am impressed with how you are shifting your knowledge to contextualise."

"I have a lot more business language now and the plan has contributed to funding application; also a better understanding of our whole vision, value in the community and costs involved. "

"Very valuable to have this one-to-one support because it is customised to needs"

"One-to-one support is vital because it is specific, and you get a lot more out of it for your business"

"This is such a great foundation for when I am confused. It gives me structure that I can lean on because structure is not my forte. I struggled a lot but you stuck with me and we got through it. It is done. Thank you so much, Tutu. It is a mindset shift."

"It's good to have the questions at ALS, however, this follow-up [1-1] session made me think about what I might have missed and helped to develop the action plans even more."

**"Funding opportunities is our priority but need knowledge of where to source. Its been helpful to have the sources provided"*

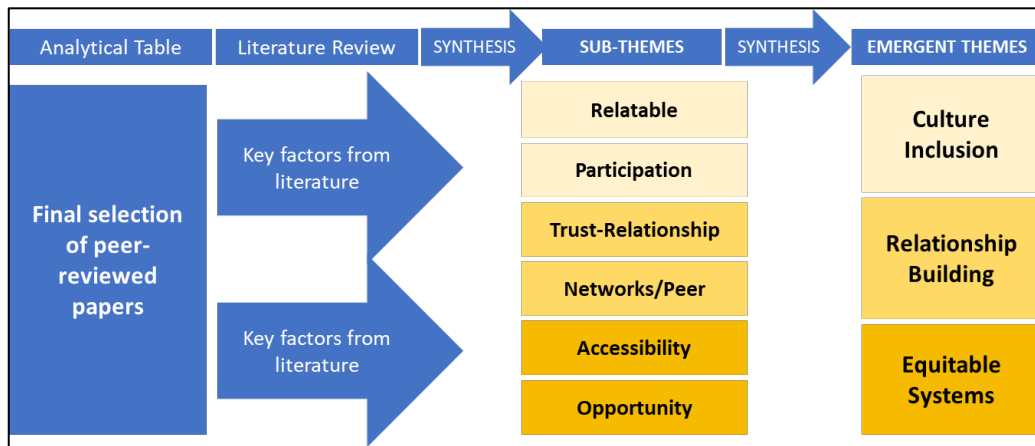
Consequentially, the themed masterclass sessions exposed them to online tender pipelines and procurement knowledge for searching and identifying opportunities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Raising awareness of opportunities and where to access them (Shelton et al., 2018). Additionally, the themed peer support served as a means of information exchange and best practices transfer with other minority businesses (Pan et al., 2022). While the personalised support improved their organisational contract readiness capability, internal management skills and processes designed to engender their long-term viability (Pan et al., 2022). Thus, giving them more equitable access to market knowledge and business support.

Despite the depth of insight and the fit between theory and practice, the study is critical of the profound absence of relationship typology in this trust-based, culturally sensitive relationship approach. The thesis, however, addresses the gap. The documented theoretical and practical linkages in Chapter 3 of this volume are critical in determining and theming the relationship typology of business support. Subsequently, this informed the summarised critical analytical table through which the sub-themes emerged, as shown in Table 09 below. The key emergent factor '**functional**' theme to business support led to the construction of the new conceptual framework which extended the theoretical framework in section 2.4.3 of Chapter 2.

In summary, the critical discussion revealed varying consensus across the sub-themes which informed the three themes 'relationship building', 'cultural inclusion' and 'equitable tailored support'. However, there is a close consensus across the 3 closest literature and the 3 projects where all but one sub-theme concurred by at least two-thirds (67%) with some at 100% consensus. Similarly, practice findings reported 100% against all sub-themes on the projects. Nevertheless, **the study uncovered a research gap in peer support**, which returned a 33% consensus against a 100% in practice. This study signals a gap in the literature on the significance of peer support in EMBs' engagement in capacity-building support for public market opportunities, which is addressed in the latter part of this chapter.

The critical discussion in this section on capacity-building relationship approaches of EMBs' market support has emerged as 'functional'. A '**Functional Relationship**' approach is purported as often associated with loyalty, trust, shared goals, clear communication and flexibility in market engagement (FC Schultz, S Everding and P Ingo, 2021). This is evident in the EMBs' supportive quotes. The next section will

critically analyse the market access factors for the study phenomenon by examining findings from extant literature and fit with practice in their procurement engagement experience. In order to move the research closer to answering the research questions.



The Theoretical Framework of Business Support Approaches is extended to the New Conceptual Framework below through the interweaving of the relationship typology concept and the fundamental grounding provided by the notion of EMBs as local-based assets in the community.

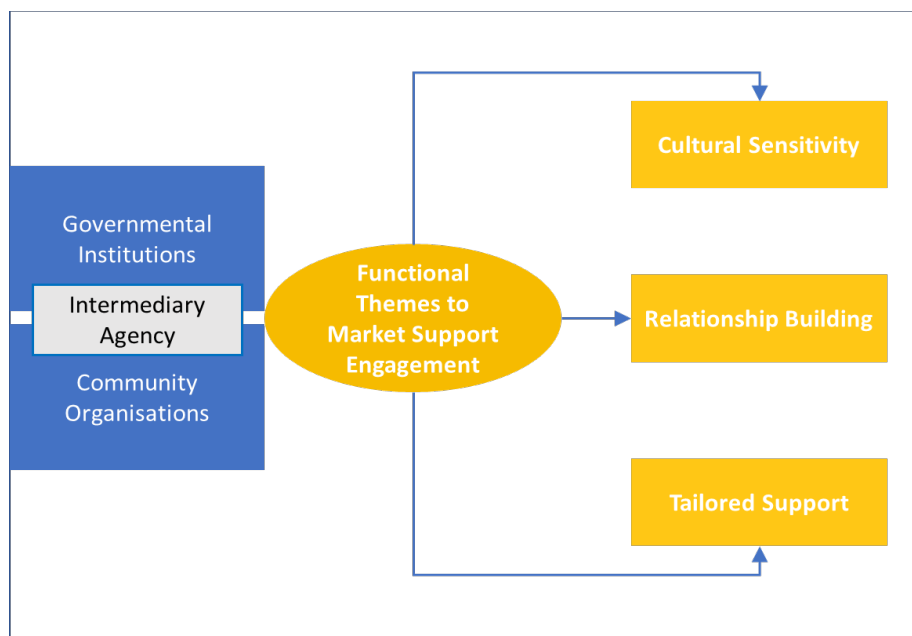


Figure 015: Conceptual framework for an asset-based culturally-inclusive collaborative approach. *Developed by the author.*

BUSINESS SUPPORT APPROACHES (2.4.3)							
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%	Closet Literature	%	Projects 1, 2 3
Functional Themes to Market (Capacity) Support Engagement	Relationship	Trust	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	67%	100%
		Relationship	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Network	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	100%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Peer support	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	38%	Pan et al., 2022	33%	100%
	Cultural Inclusion	Culture/ Relatable	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	67%	100%
	Tailored (Equitable) Support	Capability support	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%
		Opportunity access	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%

Table 09 – Combined Thematic Analytical Table of Functional Themes to Business Support Approaches from Extant Literature & Project Data. *Developed by the author.*

5.4.4 The Market Access Approaches

Since the 2011 UK Coalition Government, the UK government's policy focus on ethnic minority businesses' market access support has received increased importance. To encourage 'breakouts' from limited co-ethnic trading (Sonfield, 2014, Ram, 2019). Aiding black and minority ethnic businesses' economic engagement in public procurement opportunities (Ram et al., 2012, Woldesenbet et al., 2018). However, there is much more advanced support in the US (Ram, 2019).

Nonetheless, these initiatives open up grant and/or contract opportunities in the public sector for the EMBs' economic inclusion (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). As supported by detailed quotes from the authorities in the section above and explicated below.

“This programme will provide the expert advice and seed funding our underrepresented communities need to make lasting success a realistic goal, helping new businesses to grow – and, in turn, creating jobs for local people and feeding the Islington economy.”

“The Adult Social Care budget in our council is more than half of the council's basic budget. [...] That's a lot of money for people to be earning and economic multipliers. [...] They didn't think that care work was for them and then all of a sudden, they're in established roles. They're doing work, earning money.”

Bates (2022) reported that, unlike the UK, the US procurement programme initiatives are several decades ahead of the UK's procurement support programmes. Utilising both governmental and non-governmental agencies in programme development and roll-out to provide targeted support to EMBs (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Including active participation in intermediary-sponsored activities with notable success reported for those ethnically focused and sensitive. As seen in the three practitioner-based projects where ethnic-led infrastructure organisations, ARE and BSWN, acted as connectors between EMBs and public sector buyers (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Effectively enabling EMBs to leverage their minority status to exploit business opportunities (Pan et al., 2022). However, the study by Ram (2019), places emphasis on the systemic sensitivity to the specific circumstances of EMBs in supplier diversity initiatives. These research studies collectively continue to place importance on the functional components as seen in business support (relationship, culture and equity sensitivity) (Pan et al., 2022, Ram, 2019, Shelton et al., 2018). Culminating as fundamental factors in market engagements. Congruent with supportive quotes from participants as detailed below.

Equity, culture and relationship

[P1]

"I was really pleased to see that we came to mind because it's something that I've thought about for a long time. That people from BAME backgrounds are unable to access or get the same opportunities as other people, to be honest."

"Engage anchor organisations who have the reach to the organisations/communities.

"My engagement with BSWN in the last 8 months has given me the right perspective. For black people it's rather networking and community engagement with black people. We need organisations like this."

[P2]

"Having a BAME consultant you are better understood in a world of business where there may be obstacles standing in your way in finding funding opportunities and business development support."

"We joined the programme because we felt we could trust ARE and the team and that we would have a much greater understanding of the issues and challenges we face than if support was through other agencies or mainstream business support ."

"Culturally appropriate support was important.

[P3]

"Often overlooked, not this time because of cultural appropriateness and grant opportunity for small business."

"It was great to see the problem (of lack of funding and support for BAME, female and disabled entrepreneurs) acknowledged, recognised and ACTUAL action being taken towards addressing it."

Ram (2019) further postulated addressing the knowledge deficit through knowledge exchange activities to unleash a wider mindset to market strategy. This is congruent with Shelton et al. (2018), who asserted knowledge expansion as an approach to government and business procurement opportunities for EMBs. It also harmonizes with the project participants' supportive quotes, as detailed below.

Knowledge exchange supportive quotes

[P1]

"Framework questions we went through, I am leaving the meeting more confident with my ability to complete the questions."

"Also with the workshops, I always learn something new."

"Content covered in the workshop was most useful."

"The presentation today was a lot more detailed with more time being spent on the main aspects of financial planning."

"I find the procurement processes, platforms for bids and tendering most useful."

"I find information about the Introduction services most useful"

"It's been useful and especially for the pro-contract. I have learnt IT skills too."

"There was such a high level of data intelligence that I felt through this project. I was able to use it in order to devise or put together my bid."

"Really good going through the safeguarding question with you. We can now sit down and answer the questions."

[P2]

"I enjoyed going over application and improving them, clear and succinct. Learned how to actually answer the questions rather than make statements which is what I did."

"Gaining more confidence in bidding for contracts made a difference"

"Understanding our place in the market and pricing has been a game-changer."

"The programme made me realise that I have to do a lot of things behind the scenes."

"The programme helped me identify my weaknesses and strengths. Skills I can transfer to other areas of my business."

"I am now confident with my budgeting and profit & loss. The financial modelling of costings and breakeven point was really helpful."

"Breaking barriers in funding and learning from those who have done well and learning from them in areas that could benefit my business."

"I am now confident with my budgeting and profit & loss. The financial modelling of costings and breakeven point was really helpful."

"The initial diagnostic result was not reflective of my level of knowledge and confidence in business planning including strategising and scaling up, financial management, range of legal entities and general running of a CIC business. I did not have the knowledge and insight into business planning, strategising and scaling other than as a sole trader. Therefore, my level would be "2" for all the areas where I initially felt I was 4 or 5. I would now say I am "4" with more to learn."

"It has been a good experience for us, 10 years in business but this gives us a new way to do business, am learning so much from these sessions."

[P3]

"I feel a lot more comfortable going forward with the business because there is a structure I can look back on as a guide, we have goals within the 5-year plan."

"I have a lot more business language now and the plan has contributed to funding application; also a better understanding of our whole vision, value in the community and costs involved."

"The business plan sessions have empowered me, and the way you have made it relevant to my business has really helped."

"I can see how integrated the strategic goals (short, mid and long term) and financial plan are and I feel confident about my business and the plan for survival"

"The support of ARE and the mentorship of Tutu has been beyond invaluable. I have learnt how to approach certain topics about business management, finance and market research.

Without the knowledge and tools that I've been given, it would have taken my business a longer time to achieve these milestones. I'm very grateful to have been chosen and taken part in this grant."

"Going through the business plan the way you went through it, I have never gone through it like that. In the past, I have found it intimidating because you got given headings without explanations which has put me off. I now feel confident, knowing I have understanding."

Additionally, Shelton et al., (2018) asserted increased information access as another factor to government and business procurement opportunities for EMBs. Purporting it as an engagement tool to facilitate awareness raising of opportunities to serve these customers. Which concurs with practice findings and supportive quotes from participants as per below.

Information flow supportive quotes

[P1] - Information

"By the end of this month (Oct), I should be able to complete the framework. Your sessions have been very informative. You have been helpful sourcing information from BCC."

"The presentations were very engaging and informative."

"The openness with the discussion was most useful."

"Really happy on the clarity on CSS pricing/finance. Also we have identified 2 frameworks and you've been able to help us get clarity on which is suited to us and the costings too."

"Quite useful to hear these updates especially if you are speaking to commissioners."

[P2]

"Exchange information and knowledge with other businesses was beneficial."

"Useful and informative ideas and changes I have to make to my business e.g. on social media the use of hashtags. E-plant business outline."

"Having information for proposals such as corporate proposals, I am much more confident with reading requirements and providing answers and data to correspond with requirements."

"Very informative and supportive in terms of guidance and very structured."

[P3]

"Good to offload information and with conversation get restructured into planning and ways to move forward and better understand the business."

"Making information simple makes it easier for me."

"The sessions were very informative, giving me knowledge and confidence."

Furthermore, Woldesenbet et al., (2018), purported that removing systemic barriers by streamlining and simplifying the local authorities and other public sector organisations' public procurement processes is vital. Equally asserted by (Bates et al., 2022) and consequentially encourages participation by lowering market access barriers (Bates et al., 2022). Congruent on all three projects but uniquely different in their approaches (Ram, 2019). The Islington Council grant application was managed by ARE, which comprised a light touch application process on Project 2. In essence, a lowered systemic barrier was adopted (Bates et al., 2022). On the other hand, unique pre-grant application support was employed following an initial expression of interest in Project 3. Building their knowledge and skills to ease their path into government funding (De Armanios et al., 2017). The approach on both projects positively enhanced their chances of successful assessment for awards (Shelton et al., 2018). Conversely, the approach in Bristol was uniquely different. Comprising the direct support on application completion following a series of knowledge and information exchanges between the organisations, the council and the author. Consequentially, it positively enhanced their chances of success. Purported as a root of empowering EMBs to develop their internal systems and processes, such as initial protocols and procedures in readiness to supply to mainstream markets (Pan et al., 2022). The supportive quotes from participants are detailed below. In addition, the projects created genuine engagement, as evidenced by supportive quotes below, to gain interactions with the diverse communities of minority businesses (Ram, 2019). Conversely, the extant

literature returned a lower consensus on listening, a sub-theme of genuine engagement, creating a knowledge gap highlighted in Table 10 below.

Targeted market access supportive quotes

[P1] – market access framework application following knowledge and information exchange.

“It’s been a wonderful programme. Having access to advice, commissioners, mentors.”

“By the end of this month (Oct), I should be able to complete the framework. Your sessions have been very informative. You have been helpful sourcing information from BCC.”

“The programme was really good. I was really pleased to see that we came to mind because it’s something that I’ve thought about for a long time. That people from BAME backgrounds are unable to access or get the same opportunities as other people, to be honest. Because first of all, most people are like first-generation, second-generation immigrants who have no idea how to get these contracts.”

“There was such a high level of data intelligence that I felt through this project. I was able to use it in order to devise or put together my bid that is in line with the standards or the costing for the tenders I was looking into. It has just really helped me so much.”

“I was really surprised as to how much you can access, and I am really surprised that this information is not available out there. Especially for young black women and what Jo X said yesterday about how she could help to support.”

[P2] – market access support through a light touch grant application process.

“We joined the programme because we felt we could trust ARE and the team and that we would have a much greater understanding of the issues and challenges we face than if support was through other agencies or mainstream business support .”

“The value in having BAME consultant means the consultant understands what I may be going through. Problems and challenges that I may be facing e.g. how to access funding and opportunities.”

“Very good to see different opportunities and how my business could benefit”

[P3] – market access support through the expression of interest and pre-grant award application support.

“The pre-grant consultancy was very useful”, “had to think about what to spend the money on” and “the priorities of the brand” as well as “knowing how much things actually cost”

“Having the consultancy with the grant was a good thing”

"Without the consultancy support, honestly, I wouldn't have known even how to spend the grant."

"It was great to see the problem (of lack of funding and support for BAME, female and disabled entrepreneurs) acknowledged, recognised and ACTUAL action being taken towards addressing it."

"Often overlooked, not this time because of cultural appropriateness and grant opportunity for small business."

Genuine engagement (engagement and listening)

[P1]

"It's been interesting and nice to see someone not giving us a runaround, listening to what we said, coming back with actions."

"I think definitely the programme has opened up the lines of communication a lot better and not only the communication but the opportunities because speaking to commissioners, we are able to identify through their sessions and PowerPoint presentations that there are more opportunities. I didn't even pick up on Pro-Contract before. I saw a few but not some of the other ones they pointed out which was quite good, and they are all still closely linked."

[P2]

"To be honest it's been nice talking to you, you have listened and given constructive feedback."

"Networking to discuss and explore ideas made a difference to my business. Even listening to start-up businesses."

"I felt I was being listened to even with all my interruptions."

"You listened and understand my business and challenges"

[P3]

"It was informative and you listened."

"I have learnt a lot of business language which I have learnt from you without feeling patronised. I didn't feel that at all, it was so nice. It is hard juggling things (work and personal) but you have encouraged me and made me persevere."

In summary, the critical analytical table shows a very close consensus in the findings between the 3 closest literature and the 3 projects. Aside from the unifying functional themes – relationship, culture and equity, 3 key themes emerged from 6 sub-themes.

Of these, 4 sub-themes are at 100% consensus and 1 sub-theme at 67% against 100% on the projects. **However, the study uncovered a significant research gap, specifically, listening**, a sub-theme of genuine engagement. Thus, creating a gap in knowledge to which this doctoral study contributes. The practice finding returned a 100% consensus, demonstrating the importance of listening as a factor in genuine engagement in market access opportunities for the EMBs. Despite other theoretical and practical fits, **the study is also critical of a lack of relationship typology** to determine the relationship model that supports market access for EMBs. This study addresses the gap through the research and practice linkages in Chapter 3 developed from the wider research literature.

The sub-themes that led to the formulation of the emergent theme are closely associated with a transformational approach to market access. **'Transformational Relationship'** is purported to be associated with listening, genuine engagement, interactive support and focus on a common goal (J. Butcher, M Bezzina & W. Moran, 2011). Additionally, it involves establishing contacts between actors for tacit or explicit knowledge exchange and interaction (SM Vasin, LA Gamidullaeva, NA Wise and KY Korolev, 2020). Lastly, postulated as a relationship, often associated with trust, support and commitment (Vanichchinchai, 2019).

This led the author to develop the transformational conceptual framework in Figure 016 below, layered with the intertwined and recurring fundamental unifying themes, namely cultural and equitable inclusion and trust-based relationships as conceptually constructed in Figure 015.

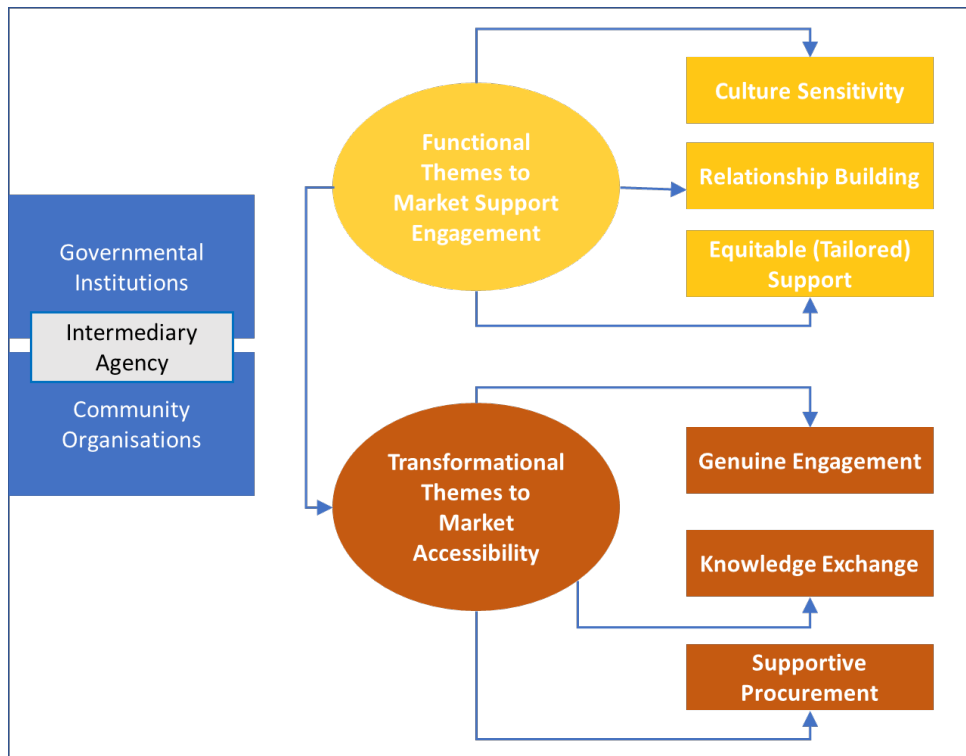


Figure 016: Conceptual framework for asset-based culturally-inclusive and equitable-system collaborative transformational approach. *Developed by the author.*

MARKET ACCESS APPROACHES (2.4.4)							
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%	Closet Literature	%	Projects
Transformational Themes to Engagement & Market Access <i>Medium lived common-goal serving</i>	Relationship	Relationship/ Connection	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
	Cultural Inclusion	Cultural/ Sensitivity	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	67%	100%
	Equitable Systems	Market Accessibility (Lower barriers)	Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%
	Genuine Engagement	Engagement (market)	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	88%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Listening	Monder Ram, 2019	13%		0%	100%
	Knowledge Exchange	Knowledge	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Information flow	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	63%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
	Supportive Procurement	Targeted access	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	88%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Interactive	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	50%	Pan et al., 2022 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%

Table 010 – Combined Thematic Analytical Table of Transformational Themes to Market Access Approaches from Extant Literature & Project Data

Developed by the author.

5.4.5 The Market Sustainable Growth Approaches

The extant literature has given an in-depth insight into the US-based long-standing procurement initiatives and the more recent UK-based procurement initiatives. Particularly where intermediary agencies have played a key role in connecting EMBs to purchasing authorities. There is consensus among several researchers on the strength of deeper relationship-building through diverse platforms to positively impact EMBs' business growth and potential success in the public sector market. However, subject to varying degrees depending on the status of the entrepreneurs (Shelton et al., 2018). Additionally, Pan et al., (2022) assert the approach of giving EMBs direct business opportunities and referrals to other market opportunities. Supported and expanded by Bates et al., (2022) as opening up the procurement market by listing purchasing councils' and corporations' procurement needs and EMBs' product offerings. Giving EMBs more visibility (Ram, 2019). However, not without limitations, as EMBs with stronger educational status, expertise and relevant work experience are preferred (Bates et al., 2022). Furthermore, incentivising these entities by adopting post-market support. Such as prompt payment, recommendations, and exposure to profitable markets and lucrative customers. To aid diversification and growth success (Shelton et al., 2018). However, it is not void of limitations as it targets stronger minority businesses. Thus, raises the question of how equitably inclusive these mechanisms are.

A rich insight has been gained from extant literature on the fundamental role of building trust and deepening trust relationships through repeated interactions (Pan et al., 2022). Posited as fundamental to exposing EMBs for supplier consideration with corporations. Their study reported a positive association with increased chances of EMBs being considered as suppliers. Arguing that increased interactions can help alleviate purchasers' capability concerns. More so, for the less connected as an ongoing requirement to engender 'trust'. (De Armanios et al., 2017). Equally concurred by Pan et al., (2022), that trust is developed through repeated past social interactions.

Congruent with the high level of interactions and engagement seen on the three unique projects as documented below.

Project One: Before the programme started in April 2021, BSWN advertised the programme openly via its website. An online Google application form was made available for expression of interest. A wider reach to the eligible participants and communities was later achieved through a selected network of local organisations and community groups. 19 organisations expressed interest, and 14 were selected to complete a diagnostic form to capture the state of their business (service areas, turnover, existing contracts, etc.). As the project gained traction, the traditional method

of word of mouth and friends/family recommendations contributed to registered interest and applications. Eventually, 22 businesses were enrolled, of which 16 were actively engaged. This group's public sector market access point was propelled by initial information flow and contract readiness support. Three of the six virtual workshops within the first 6 months were co-facilitated with authorities and open to all project participants. However, it was imperative to deepen interaction for the socially excluded entities (Pan et al., 2022, Shelton et al., 2018). As observed by the author and reinforced by feedback gathered from participants. In order to increase the market growth potential and visibility of the organisations (Ram, 2019). Supported by the annotated feedback from participants below.

<h2>The learning so far</h2>	
Lack of accessibility - cumbersome processes, complex language in tender documents, ambiguity, requirements not proportionate to size of contract value	Offer support, co-design solutions, proportionate requirements e.g. social value, business continuity, low value tenders, off framework opportunities, review of commissioning framework, tender documents, accessible market events, etc.

Culminating in several virtual small-group peer networks as detailed in volume one of this study. With increased opportunities for relevant themed sessions, particularly in support of fledging organisations (De Armanios et al., 2017). Especially as 44% (7 out of 16) lacked trading history. Giving them exposure to smaller contract opportunities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018) and alternative purchasing models best suited to their capability (Shelton et al., 2018). Supported by a quote from the council:

“Those are what we call locality-based workstreams. So, a thing called Individual Service Funds, Care Introductory Agencies, they are all mechanisms we are going to use going forward to ensure that our services are delivered on behalf of local people, to local people, quite often by local people. [...] People who were what we call micro providers, so individuals who perhaps might be counsellors, therapists or self-employed care workers who are looking to work in their community but weren't getting as much opportunity perhaps as they should have been. All those mechanisms are designed to increase those numbers of people and designed to support those people who are looking to work more closely with their neighbours and their local communities.”

Themed peer learnings were co-facilitated by council officers and the author to engender EMBs closer interactions and market opportunities. Furthermore, many one-on-one meetings were arranged by the author with officers to deepen the connections and expand knowledge exchange to facilitate market growth (Shelton et al., 2018). This is congruently supported by quotes from participants, as detailed below.

“Honestly, I cannot describe how empowered and how confident I am with the system, and I feel I have been prepared by BSWN to feel I have the liberty to go to the council and say: ‘Well, actually I don’t understand this. I have got more barriers than other businesses in the city, how could you look at things differently? How could you help me to get this done?’ From the first minute I joined the workshops, to the minute it finished it was like... that’s it! I knew exactly what I wanted from each session.”

“I think definitely the programme has opened up the lines of communication a lot better and not only the communication but the opportunities because speaking to commissioners, we are able to identify through their sessions and PowerPoint presentations that there are more opportunities. I didn’t even pick up on Pro-Contract before. I saw a few but not some of the other ones they pointed out which was quite good, and they are all still closely linked.”

“I feel like I can contact a commissioner now and they will come back to me and take me seriously, because I have been on this programme. Whereas before I didn’t feel like that. The programme actually got the commissioners to see me and because of this, I feel I am more valued and listened to.”

Furthermore, Shelton et al., (2018) postulated that increasingly established exchange relationships for opportunities with MBs help raise their purchasing power. Impacting the growth of current and future consumers. Concurred by supportive quotes from participants.

“I have been successful on one tender through this process. I have submitted another one which I am hoping I will be [successful], and I am going to start another one and this is because of this programme.”

However, it is not void of limitations due to the time constraints of these resource-limited entities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Congruent with supportive quotes below. Consequentially, a call for longer bid lead time if an equitable level of contract awards is to be achieved compared to the white counterparts (Bates et al., 2022). Additionally, a call for a less complex tendering process to promote access and market success (Woldesenbet et al., 2018). Correspondingly, curbs systemic barriers and severe market competition (Ram, 2019). Congruent with participants’ feedback.

“The procurement process is quite a lot for someone who is busy. I have been extremely busy, and it has been almost impossible for me to even put my tenders in. I have managed one which was the High Support Needs for Young People. We got that in, I had to drop everything else I was doing to focus and get it in on time. We got it in ten minutes before the deadline. I have had a reminder email today that there is another procurement that is coming up by the end of March, but the thing is I am too busy to even turn away for five seconds. I have the workforce there who, if we got the contract, could actually make it work ironically.”

We can actually make it work and put people in place and run it successfully but the time it takes to complete these bids, when you are running around just trying to keep up with the day to day, it is almost impossible.”

Nonetheless, Ram (2019) further argues for quality time in this relationship-based market engagement. Concurred by Pan et al., (2022) that the higher social barriers between businesses and corporations require more effort and more quality time to enhance the business relationships. Concurred by the participant’s quote.

“The presentation today was a lot more detailed with more time being spent on the main aspects of financial planning.”

Additionally, the project was initially commissioned for a year. However, an extension was granted as initial learnings, yet very rich, unfolded. Highlighting the level of disconnect between the businesses and the authorities. Nevertheless, with indications of promising approaches to deliver strategic impact.

“Obviously the council is a very big organisation. In a big organisation change is not always easy for people, because they have lived and worked in it so long. Seeing something different can be a bit scary so there are changes within the council that we will need to discuss to help them to understand that those changes are not scary and will actually produce better results for the citizens which is what we are all in the job for at the end of the day.”

Project Two: The market access point of this study group was administered and managed by ARE in collaboration with the council. Which entailed an initial scoping survey conducted a couple of months before the project commenced. The survey was used to identify issues and barriers faced by these entities which later informed the support package. The survey was shared on ARE’s LinkedIn and Twitter as well as Islington Council’s social media to reach as many BAM organisations across Islington as possible. Where direct enquiries were received via email, the response to the email also included a link to the survey. 32 people completed the survey. Notably, 55% of the participants found out through the Council’s website. Indicating a good engagement with the council’s web presence. Despite this, only 6 responses were initially received. Perhaps indicative of the distrust between community and authority which they articulated on-programme. However, an increase to 12 respondents later emerged. Impacted by increased awareness of ARE’s partnership on the project and trust in ARE as supported by participants’ quotes. Additionally, project participants raised awareness through word of mouth and direct recommendations/referrals.

"We joined the programme because we felt we could trust ARE and the team and that we would have a much greater understanding of the issues and challenges we face than if support was through other agencies or mainstream business support."

"I recommended two BAME women who I know could benefit from the programme, but I know that if I did not tell them about it, they would never have known about it and would never have seen the publicity."

The project was initially commissioned for 6 months. However, similar to project one, in-depth insights were unfolding and communicated to the council through project meetings. This led to an extension to 12 months, giving quality time and support to increase the market growth and success of the businesses (Ram, 2019, Pan et al., 2022). 67% were successfully registered on the procurement platform (pro-actis/contract finder) for market opportunities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018) and diversification (Ram, 2019).

"Your flexibility with the meeting time is really helpful"

"It's not about what we are doing right but being able to share with you what we are doing wrong and the time and commitment you have given."

"Peer network provided us with more information about how we present our proposals. We have now tailored our proposal, with minimal yet informative content safeguards against time-wastage and loss of potential income."

"I like the way we went through my old BTEC application and refined it. I didn't think it would take that much time. I am really happy about that. I am intrigued about the Pro-actis portal, am looking forward to the registration validation email by Wednesday."

Wow, very informative session. Some new insights into funding opportunities that I was not aware of. Really excited about the Enfield application. Very detailed process you supported. Really happy to go through in more detail the application and refining it, description of the virtual online programme, the budget and submitting it. Also looking at the Merton application which we could aspire to."

The light-touch survey questionnaire was revisited in a one-on-one with the author to engage in conversational assessment at the start of the project. This helped determine and agree on support topics for the personalised sessions and wider support. Data returned a very high level of interest; 91% of the participants desired to connect with other like-minded businesses to explore the market. Congruent with Pan et al., (2022) that as minority businesses build more relationships with corporate members and with other minority members, they expect them to experience greater growth. Supportive quotes from participants include:

"The programme made a difference sitting down to think about ideas and being able to strategise with others. Brainstorming and networking to discuss and explore some of those ideas."

"The sessions gave me insight into what other businesses are doing and what I could do better as a small business."

"Peer network added value to my business because it gave me ideas on what I need to do to boost my company, speaking out, more insights into what I could do, scaling up and even doing tutorials on YouTube."

This is further supported by Shelton et al., (2018), who postulated that government procurement initiatives are enablers, although insufficient, to reaching a critical mass of otherwise unavailable opportunities to EMBs. Increasing the likelihood of their growth and survival. Congruent with supportive quotes from participants about what they found useful.

"Breaking barriers in funding and learning from those who have done well and learning from them in areas that could benefit my business."

Gave me ideas about how to be better and consistent with what I do as well as how to scale up."

"The session has been great as always. Today, looking at our finances, comparative analysis against where we are now and making us look at pushing up the sales by year-end. I have always walked away with a plan. This is what we needed to make a difference. I appreciate it and it is always a pleasure. The way we are looking at the business now is different from when we started with you."

However, it is not void of limitations due to the time constraints of these resource-limited entities (Woldesenbet et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Congruent with supportive quotes below. Consequentially, giving them enough leading time to effectively resource plan if an equitable level of contract awards is to be achieved compared to the white counterparts (Bates et al., 2022). As explicated by their feedback on what can be improved on the programme.

What can be improved by the council/agencies:

"Give people enough time to put things in their diaries."

"Send a programme timeline out at the start of the programme with dates set in advance"

The businesses engaged with the council officers through two in-person networks, 3 months apart. Allowing the organisations to interact more closely. Including exploration of linkages with agencies and other support available to the organisations. Additionally, email engagement of practical resources about council services, networks and wider support (Pan et al., 2022). Postulated as a means of authorities deepening their connection to the communities. This was valued by the businesses and recommended to be built into future programmes as far as possible as evidenced by supportive quotes below. An approach to increasing their chances of growth and success by developing collaborative bonds (Pan et al., 2022).

What can be improved are:

"Support to work within the wider community."

"Council to provide introduction to community assets."

"It is very important to meet like-minded business owners who are already established. It would be good for the council to include this in the in-person event."

Project Three: The market access point of this study group was administered and managed by ARE in collaboration with the council. ARE and Islington launched promotional and publicity materials for the application via various social media platforms, ARE and Islington websites and through local networks and word of mouth. A wider publicity avenue inspired by feedback from Project Two.

"..It felt really good that the programme is out there, but it needed to step up a bit on the social media side of things if it is hoping to attract a younger demographic. The programme did not feature on Tik Tok or Instagram. [...]. Leaflets are great but not for Generation XYZ!..."

Subsequently, an online webinar was held to provide information on the application process and expectations. Additionally, giving an opportunity to potential applicants to engage with ARE, better understand the partnership with the council and ask questions. The session was recorded and shared. An application prospectus was made available via the ARE website to potential applicants which included the programme objectives, support offer, webinar video and a link to further information on application completion. A stimulus to market participation spawned by lowered barriers (Bates et al., 2022).

The application process comprised a short Expression of Interest form to confirm the eligibility criteria by selecting either a 'yes' or 'no' answer to the eligibility statements. Such as less than 2 years of trading history, Islington-based, demographic profile,

commitment to one-to-one support and willingness to share learning and experience. The applicants self-assessed themselves against the criteria and, if eligible, progressed to completing the application form. A time-efficient process for resource-constrained entities (Pan et al., 2022). Consequentially, a simplified gateway assessment to self-determine their eligibility (Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

Invariably, this resulted in 26 applicants, of whom 17 were invited to pitch their ideas to an all-ethnic panellist comprised of a senior leader from ARE, the programme director, and two consultants, the author being one of them. Council officers quietly observed the pitch interview. This approach engenders cultural relatability (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022), which is congruently supported by participant feedback.

“Often overlooked, not this time because of cultural appropriateness and grant opportunity for small business.”

Applicants engaged in a 20-minute session of 5 minutes to present their ideas and 15 minutes of answering questions from the panellist in a safe environment. Congruent with participant feedback.

“I have various struggles and I feel like finally something catered to my needs, I felt welcome comfortable and safe which is very important.”

All 17 were successfully selected and received pre-requisite pre-grant support of one-to-one ‘conversational’ business ideas and financial support advice before formal confirmation of the grant award. A well-received offer by all selected 17 to enable market success. Congruently supported by participant quotes.

“The pre-grant consultancy was very useful”, “had to think about what to spend the money on” and “the priorities of the brand” as well as “knowing how much things actually cost.”

“Without the consultancy support, honestly, I wouldn’t have known even how to spend the grant.”

Thus, it demonstrates mutual commitment and cooperation (Pan et al., 2022). Acclaimed by the researchers as a higher quality interactive approach.

Ultimately, the supportive market grant-award approach to this innovative and blended programme, i.e. cultural sensitivity (Shelton et al., 2018), equitable access (Woldesenbet et al., 2018) and funding (Ram, 2019) energised their market success potential. Translatable into growth and greater according to Pan et al, (2022), as the businesses build more relationships with corporates and with other minority members.

“Having this allocated time for a busy person like me helps me keep on top of things. Makes me think about the potential the business has to grow to a successful brand and entity and later be able to do the community thing I envision doing.”

Additionally, Pan et al, (2022) posited collaborative engagement as a key driver, facilitated by repeated interactions. This was concurred by Ram (2019), who reported supplier initiative as a stimulant to collaborative bidding by ethnic businesses. Whilst Woldesenbet et al., (2018) posited it as a mindset game-changer for firms becoming engaged. "Congruently supported by participants' quotes.

"For small business owners who are completely new to the idea of joint ventures, the meeting organized by Tutu was an eye-opener on how a carefully planned collaboration between two like-minded businesses can be beneficial for both parties. Tutu provided us with information on how to get started and guided us through to ensure an effective joint venture. It was a great opportunity that saved both business time and resources but also left a positive impact on our future perspective."

Despite Pan et al., (2022) positing time-constraint as a resource limitation for these entities, practice findings suggest trade-offs based on the impact of time investment. Unsurprisingly, they reported shared values and mutuality as a key driver in deepening engagement for growth. Concurred by participants' supportive quotes.

"I find ALS interesting as a way of solving mutual problems."

"[Tutu's] understanding of our BAME community and who we work with, made a real difference. We were able to connect with Tutu as we could relate to her and she understood a lot of the issues impacting the community of women we are trying to support without us having to educate or explain."

"Tapping into the ARE programme members, and even providing support for free will help us in the long run because it will help us build capacity and business relationships for us all."

Similar to the other two projects, the businesses engaged with the council officers through events. Five months part on a virtual introduction event and an in-person network event combined with project two businesses. Allowing the organisations to interact more closely. Including exploration of linkages with agencies and other support available to the organisations. Like project two, email engagement of practical resources about council services, networks and wider support were shared (Pan et al., 2022). Postulated as a means of authorities deepening their connection to the communities. This was valued by the businesses and recommended to be built into future programmes as far as possible. An approach to increasing social capital for growth and success (Pan et al., 2022).

In summary, the combined critical analytical table in Table 11 below shows a very close consensus in the findings between the 3 closet literature and the 3 projects. Aside from the unifying functional themes – relationship, culture and equity. 3 key themes emerged from 8 sub-themes with 3 sub-themes at 100% consensus and 4 other sub-themes at 67% against 100% in practice. However, **the study uncovered a significant gap, specifically, in mutuality**, a sub-theme of progression. Thus, a knowledge gap that this doctoral study contributes to in the latter part of this chapter. The practice finding returned a 100% consensus, demonstrating the importance of mutuality as a factor to progressive market growth for the EMBs.

Despite the range of theoretical and practical fits, the study is critical of the relationship typology that supports sustainable market growth. The study, through the thesis-informed novel theoretical framework in Chapter 3, addressed this gap. The sub-themes which led to the formulation of the emergent theme are closely associated with a **'Relational Relationship'** to market growth and success. A relationship characterised by stronger and longer interaction (integration), motivation and a progressive collaborative approach (A Nikulina, L Volker and M Bosch-Rekveltdt, 2022). This led the author to develop the relational conceptual framework in Figure 017 below, layered with the intertwined and recurring fundamental unifying themes, namely cultural and equitable inclusion and trust-based relationships as conceptually constructed in Figure 015.

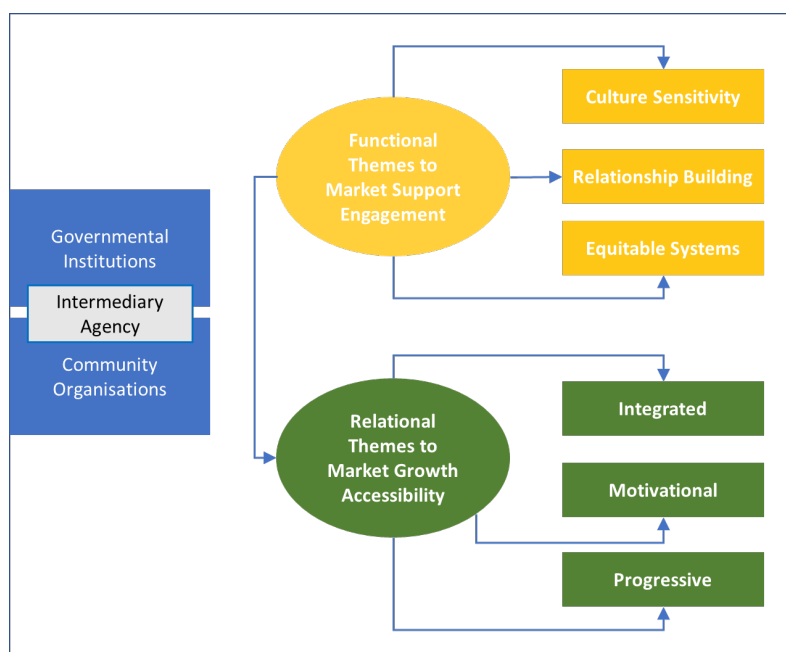


Figure 017: Conceptual framework for an asset-based culturally-inclusive and equitable-system collaborative relational approach. *Developed by the author.*

Volume 2 – Synthesis and critical analysis

MARKET GROWTH APPROACHES (2.4.5)							
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%	Closet Literature	%	Projects
<i>Relational Themes to Engagement & Market Growth</i> <i>Medium to long-lived engagement</i>	Relationship	Stronger Relationship	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Inclusion	Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Growth Accessibility	Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	38%	Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%
	Integrated	Increased Interaction	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	75%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Quality Time	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	38%	Pan et al., 2022 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%
	Motivational	Inspiring/Motivational	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	63%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
		Long-term	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	100%	100%
	Progressive	Mutuality	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	25%	Pan et al., 2022	33%	100%
		Shared values	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	38%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	67%	100%
		Growth (Scale)	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018	50%	Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	67%	100%
		Collaborative	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	38%	Pan et al., 2022 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	67%	100%

Table 011 – Combined Thematic Analytical Table of Relational Themes to Market Growth Approaches from Extant Literature & Project Data

Developed by the author.

5.4.6 The Extant Literature Gap

Overall, critical discussion between theoretical insight and practice findings on the approaches to market support, access and sustainable growth of EMBs has led to new knowledge. The study identified peer support networks as a literature gap in business support. In addition, a gap in market access where listening emerged as a significant factor. Lastly, a limitation in sustainable market growth where mutuality emerged as a significant contributory factor. As depicted below in Table 12 to address the research questions:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth and sustainability of BAM-MSES?
4. What does it mean in practice?

Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%		Closet Literature	%		Projects
Functional Theme	Relationship	Peer support	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	38%		Pan et al., 2022	33%		100%
Transformational Theme	Genuine Engagement	Listening	Monder Ram, 2019	13%			0%		100%
Relational Theme	Progressive	Mutuality	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	25%		Pan et al., 2022	33%		100%

Table 012: Literature Gap to equitable system and culturally inclusive approaches to market support, access and sustainable growth of ME-MSEs.

Developed by the author.

Peer support network (PSN), listening and mutuality.

From the extant literature, peer support is posited as peer mentoring or peer assistance (Bates et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). Where EMBs leverage co-ethnic relationships for co-sharing knowledge on dealing with challenges encountered in business opportunities and exploitation. A means of information exchange, best practices transfer and mutual learning from other minority businesses (Pan et al., 2022). Further defined by Ram (2019) as 'Action Learning Sets' fostering self-reflection and re-evaluation of business goals. Congruent with Pan et al., (2022) who highlighted the value of role models in sharing success stories and best practices.

Despite the peer assistance is impactful in ethnic co-learning by virtue of mutuality. Conversely, the approach perpetuates homophilic relationships and limits broader knowledge expansion. Although role models can help boost the confidence of other members in market opportunities (Pan et al., 2022). Conversely, targeted and inclusive support networks are increasingly vital for a group that has suffered social exclusions. Where EMBs demonstrate their social capital, e.g. information networks of community needs, as asserted by Hossain et al., (2022). Also, where their market knowledge deficit can be harnessed through exogenous relationship mechanisms to listen to EBs' perspective (Shelton et al., 2018). Not through an endogenous listening campaign with EMBs in disadvantaged areas (Ram, 2019). Hence, a targeted peer support network where EMBs, community role models and the authority representative co-interact.

Furthermore, Pan et al., (2022) purported that socialisation opportunities allow EBs to demonstrate their values, norms, and goals towards achieving mutual engagement. Thus, anchoring this as a mutual mechanism to providing targeted support for growth. Allowing mutual engagement and listening not just between like-minded businesses. Even though beneficial in business-2-business (B2B) dealings and to be encouraged. But more widely, including community ambassadors/role models and the authority 'hearing' their specific challenges, their aspirations and responding where intelligence is immediately available or provided thereafter (D Weerts and L Sandmann, 2008).

Additionally, sharing of market knowledge and pipelines and establishing a targeted growth connection process. This is the bedrock for deeper engagement and fostering of aspiration and innovative mindsets. As knowledge and targeted opportunities are shared and/or bridged. It is seen as worthwhile for the resource-constrained entities due to resource optimisation (time wisely used) to share their aspirations and gain insight from like-minded businesses. But more importantly, the authorities' perspective and targeted opportunities pipeline, clarification opportunities, and building inclusive relationships and mutuality. Where their ideas and limitations can be heard by the authorities and targeted support provided to enable sustainable growth.

Fostering a deeper sense of mutuality demonstrated through targeted peer support networks inclusive of growth aspirants, idea generators and exchange of information to sharpen their propositions or products to aid alignment with the authorities' future market pipelines. Tantamount to Ram (2019) assertion that (ALS) learning sets are an opportunity for self-reflection and re-evaluation of their business goals. However, converse to their study in a mixed peer environment. Embedding the opportunity for goal re-evaluation through a socially expanded and targeted support network. Creating deeper integrated relationships.

Aside from capability as revealed by several extant literature and practice findings aided through tailored and culturally sensitive support, lowered barriers (equitable systems) and relationship building. Market growth has been reported theoretically and practically as necessitating increased connections (both social and business networks) with purchasers, expanded market knowledge and opportunities. Consequentially, to sustain growth and success, an equitable and inclusive platform or environment must be established to facilitate these factors. Beyond engaging in learning through peer-to-peer support with other ethnic businesses. Arguably, empowering (Pan et al., 2022) and motivational (Hossain et al., 2022). But limited in exposure to networks outside of ethnic enclaves. Hence, a divergent from p-2-p to targeted peer support networks inclusive of the purchasing authority, community-oriented role models and ethnic businesses. Culminating in a targeted relational relationship, engendering ongoing listening for mutual corporation to aid sustained market participation and growth success. A targeted approach congruently supported by quotes from participants as per below.

[P1]

"Exploring service provision through an agency model: "I was really surprised as to how much you can access, and I am really surprised that this information is not available out there. Especially for young black women and what Jo X said yesterday about how she could help to support us. Thank you."

"Housing information for organisations providing Supported Living was most useful; helped me to understand and concentrate on service provision – which is supported living."

"I want to be part of the following external support network - financial management and scaling; and marketing."

[P2]

Business exploration in the peer network added value to my business, gave me ideas on what I need to do to boost my company, speaking out, more insights into what I could do, scaling up and even doing tutorials on YouTube."

[P3]

"The programme allowed time to do the exploration that could not otherwise be done. Makes me think about the potential the business has to grow to a successful brand and entity."

[P1]

"You guys have brought Business X and I together, the work is going to be a lot and it is going to be rewarding."

"I am looking forward to the opportunity with Lloyds Bank and I am really pleased you picked growth and associated support areas."

[P2]

"The difference the programme made is the partnership brokerage facilitated within and across both programmes by consultant."

[P3]

"Thank you so very much Business X for your words of wisdom and if I have any questions I won't hesitate to reach out." "I am really happy, Tutu. I want to thank you for getting me in contact with Business X, that was top-notch."

"Excellent brokerage experience. It added a further practical aspect that I can utilise after the programme ends. Useful due to the expertise and signposting being provided by Business X in the tech and social media field, an area that is relatively new to me. I will have a long-term relationship with Business X that will benefit my business."

"The brokerage with a financial accountant. That in itself is very beneficial because I was quickly aware and a little anxious about not having you after a little while."

5.4.7 The Wider Literature Criticality

This study acknowledges and documents the significant progress researchers have made in exploring knowledge in community capacity development (R Phillips and R H. Pittman, 2015). Through ‘asset-based’ approaches (J Gruidl, B Stout and D Markley, 2015). Equally, several extant literature on approaches to ethnic minority business support (Sonfield, 2014). Conversely, studies have reported a low take-up which they claim is often associated with the achievement of social objectives rather than economic ones (Parker, 2006), (Scott and Irwin, 2009). Congruent with practice findings, *“We’ve been there before, nothing changes.”* However, this doctoral study has highlighted the possibility of reverting ineffectiveness that transcends adopting an equitable approach which extant studies posited resulted in low-take and returned social rather than economic impact. Specifically, integral to equitability is the relationship factor in engagement. A relationship factor that is longer-lasting in contrast to the critiqued short-lived measures (Ram et al., 2012). Opined as inconsistent and underdeveloped approaches.

Additionally, is practitioner credibility in the engagement of these unique entities (A Cavalcanti and J Ferreira, 2021). Notably of importance as asserted by Haq et al., (2021) that co-ethnic relationships increase the natural communication flow and a greater sense of loyalty and friendship. Supported by the participants, *“It’s easier to talk to you”*; *“We don’t have to explain ourselves because you understand the challenges we face”*. However, the lack of studies on relationship typology in enterprise support of EMBs signals a fundamental gap in determining the effectiveness of engagement approaches.

Despite the assertion of communication flow by Haq et al., (2021), the doctoral study is critical of and raises the question of why there are failings even when a ‘cultural’ lens is employed in business support delivery through ethnic business associations or ethnic community-based organisations (Monder Ram and Trevor Jones, 2009). Some extant studies attribute it to the limited potential of public sector measures and policies to boost enterprise amongst under-represented EM groups (Parker, 2006, Blackburn et al., 2006, Shelton et al., 2018, Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

Congruent with Ram et al., (2006), who purported the need for a more integrated approach reflective of the interlinked economic and social relationships in which EMBs are rooted. Congruent with practice findings, where engagement is fostered by the integrated approach of culture (*“it is important to be supported by people that look at us”*), relatability (*“you understand what we have been through”*), relationships through social connections with peers (*“be in the room with like-minded people”*). Especially for a population that values a shared sense of identity and past experiences

(Bruursema 2015). Having been bereft of external key networks (*“they don’t listen to us”, “it is because of this programme that I can now have access to officers”*). Thus, resulting in them keenly recognising their individual community skills as a collective value (S Nwankwo, J Akunuri and N Madichie, 2010). Promulgating the development of co-ethnic relationships (Pan et al., 2022, Haq et al., 2021) and social capital as a result of shared life experiences (Harrison et al., 2019).

Conversely, this reinforces homogenous relationships and co-ethnic customs rather than encouraging ‘breakouts’ from the limited co-ethnic trading (Sonfield, 2014, Ram, 2019). As evidenced in practice: *P1 “ways to overcome barriers is strategic liaison between council officers and community organisations, building relationships and trust”; P3 – further explicated by the council’s report, which stated “the majority of the businesses that were reported as disproportionately in the ownership of women and people from BAME communities were reported as already pessimistic about their long-term viability”*.

<https://democracy.islington.gov.uk/documents/s28415/Final%20Report%20-%20Employment%20Business%20Economy%20Council%20Finances.pdf>

The study reveals the complex interplay of factors influencing the effectiveness of external support, policy interventions, and the structural barriers faced by entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship exploration, particularly in the context of small-sized enterprises. Significant issues highlighted in extant literature are the lack of trust and low uptake of external support among these enterprises, particularly those owned by people from ME backgrounds. Scott & Irwin (2009) elucidate how gender, ethnicity, and education significantly impact the propensity of small-medium enterprises to seek external advice and financing, leading to a conceptual model of "discouraged advisees" that underscores the barriers faced by these enterprises in accessing necessary resources (Scott & Irwin, 2009). This lack of trust is further compounded by the perception that government policies do not adequately address the unique needs of diverse entrepreneurial populations, as noted by (Afolabi et al., 2022), who argue that scepticism about government agendas can hinder engagement with sustainability practices among SMEs (Afolabi et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, encouraging ME communities into entrepreneurship has been an implicit feature of the small firm policy agenda in the UK since the 1980s (Ram M. , Published online: 30 Jun 2010). However, the ineffectiveness led to a call for a revisit of the revelation of innovative practices (T. Oc and S. Tiesdell, 1999). Leading to a landscape change in early 2000 for these under-represented groups (R Blackburn and M Ram, 2006). With recommendations from researchers who questioned the effectiveness of policy-related initiatives on EMBs' economic prospects (Ram et al., 2008). Bennett

(2008) similarly highlights how economic conditions and the broader policy environment further exacerbate the challenges faced by these businesses. The study discusses how the historical context of SME policy support in Britain has evolved, yet many SMEs still struggle with underinvestment and market access issues (Bennett, 2008). Thus, highlighting the ongoing need for policy reform that addresses the specific needs of these enterprises. Including targeted support to enable EMBs' breakout from co-ethnic customs and markets into the mainstream economy (Engelen, 2001), (Basu, 2011). By the end of the decade, this culminated in a call for the re-assessment of supplier diversity of EMBs in mainstream business initiatives (Ram et al., 2010).

Moreover, researchers have, in the past decade, continued to critique the ineffectiveness of enterprise policies and interventions. Arshed et al., (2014) argue that the ineffectiveness of these policies often stems from poor policy formulation, which fails to address the real needs of entrepreneurs. Similarly, Wei et al. (2019) argue that many entrepreneurship policies fail to deliver desired outcomes due to a lack of alignment with the actual needs of the enterprises, suggesting that policymakers often overlook the specific challenges faced by different segments of the entrepreneurial community (Wei et al., 2019). Furthermore, Xheneti (2021) extends this argument by suggesting that policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship for social inclusion are often not well-targeted or effective. Similarly, Gaur et al., (2011) lay emphasises on not adopting a one-size-fits-all approach that neglects the structural barriers that many entrepreneurs encounter. This profoundly aligns with practice findings, *"We are often overlooked"*, and *"We are being treated like the big business"*. Elucidating Ram et al., (2010) and Pan et al., (2022) call for greater ethnic minority involvement in programme design and delivery. However, the doctoral study is critical of the limited procurement initiative studies to implicate enterprise policy despite the call for minority involvement in co-design and delivery (Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

Literature also points to the necessity of a more nuanced understanding of the structural conditions that affect entrepreneurial success, such as market access and discrimination (J Kim and M.J Park, 2022). Additionally, the concept of "agent-centric" support is critiqued for failing to consider the broader economic and social contexts in which entrepreneurs operate Ram et al. (2017). Their study argues that without addressing these structural barriers, such as access to markets and resources, the effectiveness of support initiatives remains limited (Kim and Park, 2022). An argument supported by the outcomes achieved by the businesses on the 3 targeted and comprehensive programmes and documented in Volume One of this study. Echoed by their supportive quotes, *"I think definitely the programme has opened up the lines of communication a lot better and not only the communication but the opportunities*

because speaking to commissioners, we are able to identify through their sessions [...] that there are more opportunities I didn't even pick up on Pro-Contract before. I saw a few but not some of the other ones they pointed out which was quite good, and they are all still closely linked."

This sentiment of addressing structural barriers is echoed by Wei et al., (2019), who emphasise the importance of providing comprehensive support that encompasses financial resources and psychological and emotional guidance for entrepreneurs, particularly in the face of failure (Wei et al., 2019). Congruent with Project 3's aim "to provide 'blended' support of financial and capacity building targeted at early-stage entrepreneurs".

Furthermore, the role of trust in the entrepreneurial ecosystem cannot be overstated. Kumar et al., (2011) identify the need for building trust through reliable relationships and transparent communication as essential for fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurship. In addition to trust, the literature highlights the importance of tailored support mechanisms that consider the unique challenges faced by different entrepreneurial groups. Davidson et al., (2010) emphasise the necessity for support agencies to develop targeted strategies that address the specific barriers encountered by Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) entrepreneurs rather than relying on generic approaches that may not resonate with these communities (Davidson et al., 2010). This targeted approach is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of support initiatives and ensuring they are responsive to the diverse needs of the entrepreneurial landscape. *Congruent with practice findings that emerged on the practitioner-based projects from the comprehensive targeted trust-based culturally inclusive support and relationship-driven collaboration between authorities and community for equitable market access. The positive outcomes achieved are documented in Volume One of this study.*

In summary, the synthesis of these wider studies reveals a multifaceted landscape of entrepreneurship support that is fraught with challenges related to trust, policy formulation, and structural barriers. To enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship support initiatives, it is imperative that policymakers and support agencies adopt a more inclusive mechanism for policy formulation and a tailored approach that considers the diverse needs of entrepreneurs (Xheneti, 2021). By addressing the systemic issues that hinder access to resources and fostering an environment of trust and collaboration, it is possible to create a more conducive ecosystem for entrepreneurship that ultimately benefits the broader economy (Scott and Irwin, 2009, Davidson et al., 2010, Ram et al., 2017).

This doctoral study highlights the fragmented views across numerous extant studies on sustainable engagement approaches to market support, access and sustainable growth for EMBs. Coupled with the limited enterprise measures and effective policies to facilitate sustainable economic impact. Furthermore, the thesis is critical of the dearth of research papers on relationship typology in ME enterprise support or preferential procurement initiatives. The review and synthesis of obtainable and peer-reviewed extant literature that informed the four relationship typologies is detailed in Chapter 4 above. This provided the author with a fundamental mechanism for the formulation of dyadic relationships in human interactions within operational and collaborative environments (Ross, Turnbull and Wilson, 2003). This systematically grounded study enabled the multi-faceted discussion documented in this study and the emergent relationship model detailed in Chapter 3. Ultimately, it helped frame and characterise the relationship factors determined from the review of practitioner-based projects with a relational relationship as the emergent best practice model.

Consequentially, the ABCD study identified a gap in the best practice model and emergent properties of relationship-building (Harrison et al., 2019). Similarly, Pan et al., (2022) identified a lack of the relationship dynamics established through connecting the EMBs to market opportunities in relationship-driven procurement initiatives. This doctoral study addresses both through this systematically grounded study. It helped uncover the impact of time on how the relationship evolved in practice from the traditional transactional approach to a flexible, functional approach based on the asset-based model with limited sustainable change impact. Transcending with time to a transformational relationship where increased interaction is observed. Coupled with the impact of increased knowledge exchange on mindset change from ambivalence to aspiring to engage due to employing an interactive approach to knowledge development (Woldesenbet et al., 2018).

Uniquely, practice findings highlighted the impact of a relational relationship as a long-term, longer-lasting approach to engagement, integration and inclusion, to name a few. Aiding sustainable growth as evidenced by the outcomes of all 3 projects and, in particular, the 4 case studies documented in Project One. Secondly, a relational relationship is a precursor to involvement in key networks, service reviews and policy platforms. For example, the invitation and contribution of minority people (the author) to the BCC's scrutiny panel informed the new procurement strategy and contracting procedure. Also, several invitations were extended to businesses to review and co-design new or improved services. Consequentially, it challenged biases such as EMBs' capability bias, racial bias, purported entrepreneurial time constraints, etc. Thus, for policymakers, this study provides insight into the socio-economic

capabilities of ME enterprises and the implications of procurement approaches in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprise policy (Xheneti, 2021).

Lastly, the combined insight of the criticality of core and wider literature fit with practice, the thesis-informed-novel-theoretical-framework in Chapter 3 Section 3.7 combined with the conceptual framework as described by Miles and Huberman (1994) helped the author to determine and depict the relationships between research factors (market capacity support, access and growth) and emergent properties of relationship-building as conceptually illustrated in Figure 018 below. This helped to explicate the direct influence of relationship type on minority ethnic businesses’ capacity support for market accessibility and growth. The engagement in capacity support, market access and growth prospects increased as the relationship between authorities and the community deepened from transformational to relational collaboration. Leading to the construction of a new conceptual framework to fill the research gap on emergent properties of relationships for capacity-building and the sustainable economic impact of the study phenomenon.

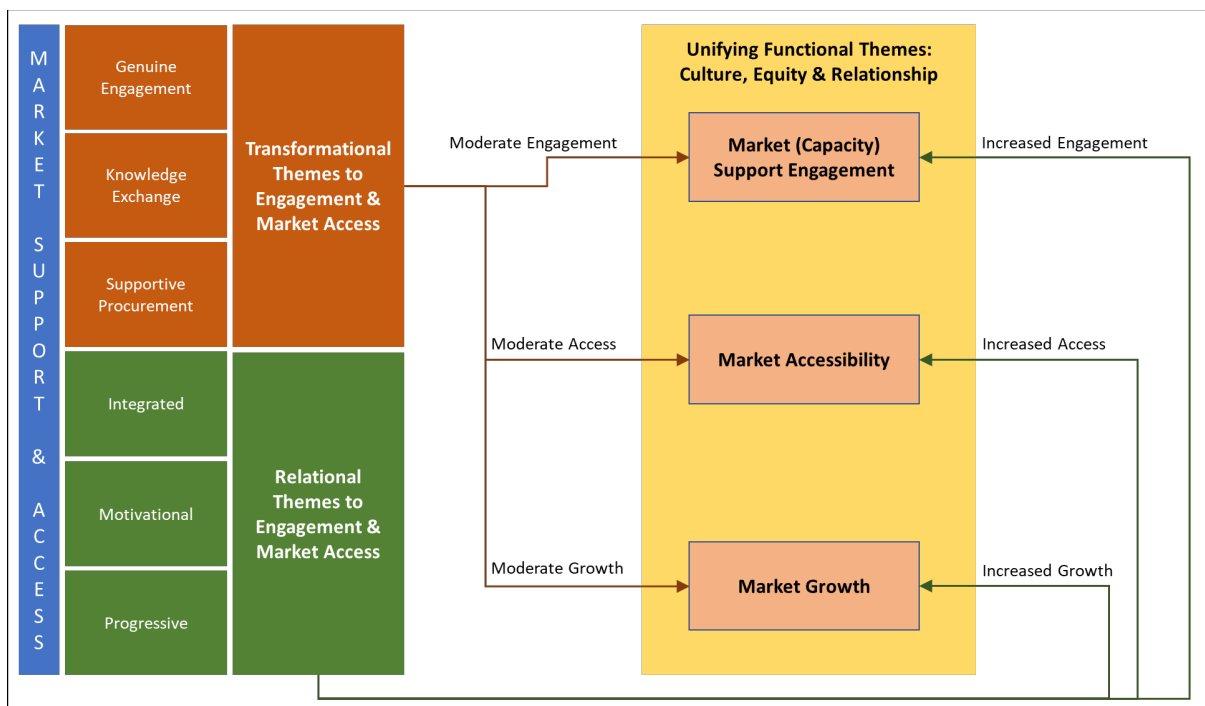


Figure 018: Novel Conceptual Framework for an Asset-based Culturally-Inclusive and Equitable-System Collaborative Approach. *Developed by the author.*

5.4.8 The Contribution to Wider Literature

The study advances business support and enterprise knowledge in several ways. It uniquely extends existing concepts through the interweaving of the relationship typology concept and the fundamental grounding provided by the notion of EMBs as local-based assets in the community. Additionally, it provides insight into the effective formulation of enterprise policy to impact the socio-economic participation of minoritised and small businesses.

Contribution 1

The criticality of practice findings with extant knowledge exposed a gap in relationship typology. ***Specifically, the doctoral study contributes a new concept to the business support research field by uniquely developing a novel framework of relationship typology to advance knowledge in relationship-driven engagement approaches and resultant outcomes in enterprise support.***

Contribution 2

The criticality of practice findings with extant knowledge of EMBs' capability revealed insights aligned with the 'asset-based' model. This model for community development recognises and builds on the strength of communities. Therefore, despite EMBs' need for business process or protocol empowerment, they are locally based organisations with valuable skills, knowledge, and strengths. Thereby exposing a knowledge gap in business support research papers. ***Specifically, the doctoral study advances knowledge by uniquely adapting asset-based community development into enterprise support to develop a novel concept of 'asset-based relational relationship capacity support' for the sustainable economic impact of ME-MSEs in enterprise development.***

Contribution 3

The criticality of practice findings with wider literature in enterprise policy and business support for ME and MSEs exposed a knowledge gap. ***Specifically, the doctoral study advances knowledge by adding to the body of literature on small and minoritised-led businesses to implicate effective enterprise policy by uniquely contributing a novel concept of community inclusion relational approach in policy formulation to implicate practice and enhance the socioeconomic procurement approaches and equitable inclusion of ME and MSEs in economic opportunities.***

5.4.9 The Contribution to Core Literature

Firstly, rich insight was gained from synthesising extant literature on the asset-based model of collaboration. The findings from the review provided grounding for the subsequent literature streams to answer the research question. The studies of Pretorius et al., (2012), Bruursema (2015) and Harrison et al., (2019) purported the positive impact of asset-based against needs-based when complemented with participatory frameworks. Equally, Harrison et al., (2019), congruent with the other two studies, posited it as a relationship-driven model. Postulated as a power dynamic shift from accountability-led to objectives-led actions, as evidenced by the piloted projects underpinning this doctoral study. However, Harrison et al., (2019) cited the emergent relationship properties of this inclusive relationship-driven model as insufficient. Therefore, this doctoral study complements their study and extends knowledge through the systematically grounded asset-based capacity-building collaborative model of market engagement for minoritised organisations.

Contribution 4

Specifically, the doctoral study answers the call of Harrison et al., (2019) on the best practice model relationship and emergent properties. Uniquely, a relational relationship emerged as the best practice model relationship characterised by integration, motivation and progressive factors.

Secondly, rich insight was gained from synthesising the study's three closest extant literature on preferential procurement initiatives to support market engagement, accessibility and growth of minority-led businesses. Unlike the UK, the US procurement programme initiatives are several decades ahead of the UK's procurement support programmes. Utilising both governmental and non-governmental agencies in programme development and roll-out to provide targeted support to EMBs (Shelton et al., 2018, Pan et al., 2022). However, the study conducted by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) contributes a UK perspective to supplier development initiatives.

The East Midlands, Leicester-based UK study developed small businesses run by under-represented groups (women, ethnic minorities and social enterprises). The study utilised a co-production model to develop highly personalised, sector and firm-specific business support and themed workshops. With up to 20 hours of one-to-one contract-readiness support including organisational diagnostics, product development (e.g. policies), knowledge of procurement platforms, searching and sourcing for opportunities, etc. Despite the study positively impacting the entrepreneurs' mindset in engaging in public market opportunities, Woldesenbet et al., (2018) cited their study

as insufficient for generalizability and to implicate enterprise policy and practice. Mainly the study was limited to a local supplier development initiative and a purposively selected sample of 20 businesses.

This doctoral study utilised a similar contextualised approach to business support, including intensive, personalised one-to-one capacity building in contract-readiness development and exposure to opportunities and business success. On project one, each participant received 18 hours of customised one-to-one support, project two received 25 hours, and project three received 23 hours in addition to themed workshops and sector knowledge. The research geography was wider in addition to over double the sample size of businesses commissioned by local authorities in South-East England (London) and South-West England (Bristol). Like Woldesenbet et al., (2018), women, minoritised businesses and social enterprises were engaged. However, newly established enterprises and those over 10 years of trading history, including those with disability, across the private and social enterprise sectors, were also engaged. A non-probability sampling (combination of purposive and snowball) was employed to recruit 51 participants, of which 39 fully engaged across the three projects. Congruent to Woldesenbet et al., (2018), the support positively impacted the EMBs' engagement, market access and successes, as explicated in the discussion section above.

Contribution 5

Therefore, from a theoretical point of view, the study answers the call by Woldesenbet et al., (2018) to address the generalizability of the highly customised firm-and-sector-specific business support. And specifically extends their study by uniquely strengthening the case to implicate enterprise policy and practice.

Thirdly, Shelton et al., (2018) call for a well-designed study with a cultural sensitivity and testing the generalizability of their study where all participants were based in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area. The study highlights that the preferential procurement programme enables EMBs to leverage their ethnic status. Particularly encouraged by seeing people who look like them. However, they also postulated that growth and success potential are linked to high growth or stronger minority businesses. The study purposively selected from the top ten Blacks and Hispanics on the Inc. 5000 lists. Which enlists the 5000 fastest-growing private firms with at least \$100,000 in revenue in 2019 and \$2M in 2022. Specifically, their study included those from under \$0.5M to \$10M. Thus, it excluded any systematic patterns involving lower-ranked firms, which the study recognised as a limitation that could affect the

generalizability of the results. Conversely, the participants' revenue on the underpinning projects of the doctoral research ranged from £0 to slightly over £1M. A significant majority (75%), some of whom were newly established, turnover ranged from £0 to under £50K across the 3 projects. A case study of 4 businesses in Bristol experienced growth within a year from £0 to £377K collective turnover.

Contribution 6

This doctoral study complements their study that preferential procurement programs may be a viable means for Black and minority-led entrepreneurs to expand their product market access. Particularly by embedding cultural sensitivity in a well-designed programme, as evidenced by the portfolio of projects that underpin this doctoral study. Specifically, the doctoral research extends their study by answering the call to address the generalizability of the approach to lower-ranked firms. Uniquely, the doctoral study answers the call and highlights the importance of an equitable systemic approach to market support, access, and growth opportunities, irrespective of the entrepreneur's revenue ranking, to facilitate EMBs' market growth.

Lastly, the study by Pan et al., (2022) has given rich insight into minority businesses' participation in intermediary-sponsored procurement initiatives in the midwestern USA. Including the role of intermediaries, the Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council (OMSDC), in connecting members to resources including market access. Their study highlights the importance of EMBs' active participation, which influences their relationships with corporate and other minority members. However, the study recognises their constrained resources. Dictating the need to wisely select the type of activities they participate in. To a varying degree, the study also recognises a correlation between relationship-building and EMBs' growth. Despite this, knowledge is cited as not sufficient for generalizability outside of the US and to other types of intermediaries that are established to connect their members to valuable resources. Finally, knowledge is cited as insufficient on relationship dynamics formed through procurement initiatives. Citing the limitations of a survey design. Suggesting a thorough content analysis via a case study with intermediaries would provide more context regarding relationship dynamics.

This doctoral study complements their study that preferential procurement programs require EMBs' active participation and the role of intermediaries in establishing connections. 39 EMBs were actively engaged from across the 3 portfolio-based projects in the two case study organisations who partnered with two ethnic-led intermediaries. A systematically grounded qualitative form was employed to uncover

and gain deep insight into the study phenomenon. Therefore, the doctoral study extends their study and answers the call to address thorough content analysis and the generalizability of the approach across other types of intermediaries. A consistent finding was delivered across the two intermediaries in different geographical locations.

Contribution 7

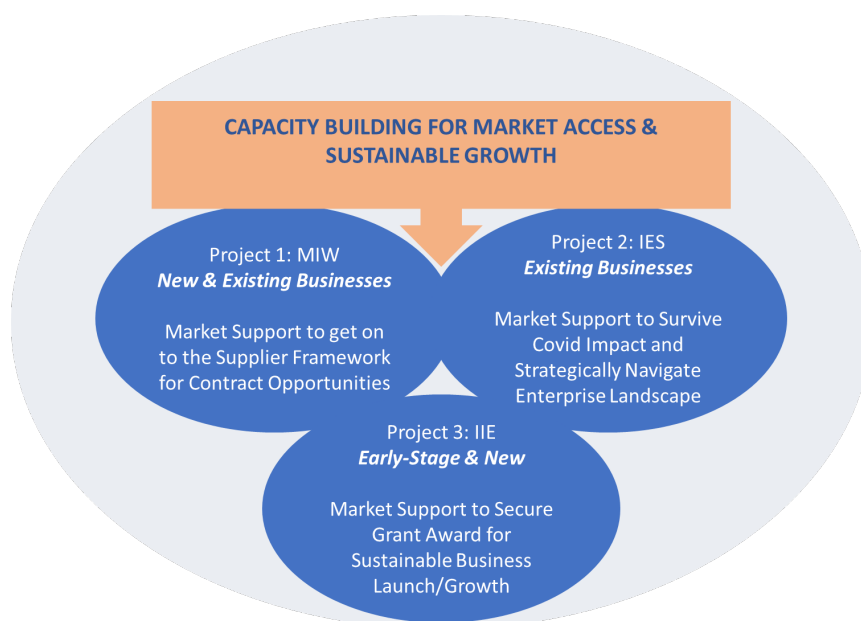
Uniquely, the doctoral research extends their study and answers the call to address the generalizability of the approach outside of the US. Including conducting qualitative research to gain deep insights into the dynamics of relationships formed through intermediaries. The doctoral study employed a systematic theory-grounded approach and an interpretivist, inductive qualitative methodology to the two case studies comprising 39 EMBs, connected to the public sector organisations through two intermediaries in SE England (London) and SW England (Bristol). Specifically, the doctoral study extends their study to answer the call on relationship dynamics formed through the initiatives as targeted relational relationships. To engender an equitable approach to sustain EMBs' active participation and success. Characterised by ongoing integration, motivation and progressive collaboration.

Chapter Six – The Conclusion and Limitations

6.1 The Conclusion

The three practitioner-based projects underpinning this PhD by portfolio study were uniquely different, as documented in Chapter 5 above and detailed in Volume One of this study. Despite their uniqueness, the three projects also have a unique connection.

The capacity building of Minority Ethnic Micro-Small Enterprises (ME-MSEs) into market access and sustainable growth through the model of asset-based, equitable systems- and culturally inclusive collaboration between the community (MEMSEs) and the authority (commissioners) uniquely connects the three projects as illustrated below. To promote and facilitate productive, relatable, and meaningful engagement and resultant outcomes namely organisational development and better access to opportunities for sustainable growth of the entity.



The connectivity framework of the three projects. *Developed by the author.*

Project One:

A Southwest England-based 'test and learn' project delivered in partnership with Black Southwest Network between April 2021 and March 2023 to strategically support Bristol City Council's aim of better social care outcomes for citizens from Black, Asian and Minoritised (BAM) communities by diversifying its supply chain through capacity building BAM organisations to enter into the Adult Social Care (ASC) market. Also, more broadly, to aid the business development and sustainability of BAM businesses.

Project Two:

A Southeast England-based ‘tailored’ project targeted at COVID-19-impacted local BAM businesses between October 2021 and November 2022. The first partnership programme with Action for Race Equality to deliver the council’s strategic objectives to support business owners from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds to build their resilience and capacity to keep their businesses running and to equip them strategically navigate the enterprise landscape in the UK.

Project Three:

A Southeast England-based project to provide ‘blended’ support of financial and capacity building targeted at early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly those from BAME backgrounds, female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs with a disability, to help address disproportionate and significant barriers to success. This second partnership programme between Action for Race Equality and Islington Council’s Inclusive Economy & Jobs was delivered between January 2022 and December 2022. Seed funding enabled businesses to kick start their ideas and business support to grow and sustain their businesses and create local employment.

As a PhD by portfolio, the mechanism is to learn from practice and utilise theoretical knowledge to retrospectively examine the three projects to inform and contribute unique knowledge to the sector. In this volume of the research study, the author as a researcher appraises, critically analyses and ultimately addresses the research questions arising from the reflective review of the portfolio of practitioner-based projects as detailed in volume one:

1. What approaches would facilitate engagement in capacity support (R1a) and equitable market access for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services (R1b)?
2. Why is it strategically critical for the commissioner of services to consider alternative approaches (R2)?
3. How do the approaches impact the growth (R3a) and sustainability of BAM-MSES (R3b)?
4. What does it mean in practice (R4)?

The PhD study is grounded in a systematic approach and conducted a systematic review of extant literature that led the author to set forth a layered conceptual

framework to demonstrate the approach to engagement and support for equitable market access of the study phenomenon in grants and commissioned services (i.e., the what) and the impact of these approaches on the growth and sustainability of the phenomenon (i.e., the how) and the strategic importance for the commissioner of services (i.e., the why). Ultimately, the impact of the study in practice.

The knowledge gained from the criticality of extant literature and practice insights contributes new and unique knowledge to core theories and wider literature. This aids the doctoral study in answering the research questions and uniquely contributes to the field. In conclusion:

The study answers the research questions (R1a, R1b, R2, R3a and R3b) and contributes to core theories.

Firstly, the broader preliminary answer to research question one (R1) of this doctoral study on approaches that facilitate engagement in capacity support for market development through the notion of them as local-based community assets specifically answer the call of Harrison et al., (2019) on the best practice model relationship and emergent properties in asset-based community capacity development. ***This uniquely emerged as a relational relationship as a best practice model relationship characterised by integration, motivation and progressive factors.***

Secondly, the study specifically answers research question one (R1a) on approaches that facilitate capacity support for Black, Asian and Minority-led Micro-Small Enterprises in grant awards or commissioned services and uniquely contributes to the study of Woldesenbet et al., (2018) on the generalizability of highly customised firm-and-sector-specific business support to implicate enterprise policy and practice. The results of all three unique projects and the ***study add to the body of literature*** on highly customised business support and ***uniquely strengthen the case to implicate enterprise policy and practice.***

Thirdly, the study specifically answers research questions one (R1b) and two (R2) and uniquely extends the study of Shelton et al., (2018) by responding to the call to address the generalizability of the preferential procurement approach to financially lower-ranked firms. The doctoral study participants' turnover ranked from £nil to just only one, with over £1M across all three projects. Over 75% with turnover between £nil and under £50K. Less than 25% with a turnover between £50K and £250K and 3% with a turnover of just over £1M. The positive outcomes delivered by the study approach ***uniquely highlight the importance of applying an equitable systemic approach (to market support, access, and growth opportunities) irrespective of entrepreneur revenue status.***

Fourthly, the study specifically answers the research question (R3a) on approaches that facilitate market growth and uniquely extends the study of Pan et al., (2022) by answering the call to the generalizability of the preferential procurement initiative outside of the US and through qualitative research for deeper insights into the relationship dynamics formed through connecting intermediaries. The doctoral study applied a systematic theory-grounded qualitative approach to uncover what factors engender an equitable systemic approach to sustain EMBs' active participation and success. ***A targeted relational relationship uniquely emerged. Characterised by ongoing integration, motivation and progressive collaboration and underpinned by the unique and critical sub-themes - listening, peer support network and mutuality.*** To sustain MEB-MSEs' market growth and answer research question R3b.

Furthermore, the study uniquely strengthens the answer to research question (R3b), provides an answer to (R4) and contributes to the wider literature:

*It contributes a new concept to the business support research field by **uniquely developing a novel framework of relationship typology to advance knowledge in relationship-driven engagement approaches** and resultant outcomes in enterprise support.*

*It advances knowledge by **uniquely adapting asset-based community development into enterprise support to develop a novel concept of asset-based relational relationship capacity support** for the sustainable economic impact of ME-MSEs in enterprise development. This strengthens the answer to the research question (R3b) on change sustainability, namely growth sustainability.*

*It advances knowledge by adding to the body of literature on small and minoritised-led businesses to implicate effective enterprise policy by **uniquely contributing a novel concept of community inclusion relational approach in policy formulation to implicate practice** and enhance the socioeconomic procurement approaches and equitable inclusion of ME and MSEs in economic opportunities. This provides an answer to research question 4 (R4).*

Overall, the rich findings from this systematic theory-grounded qualitative empirical inquiry approached inductively from an interpretive philosophical lens led the author to revise the proposed research aim. If we return to the original study aim, which posed a statement “asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaboration”, and given the contributions of this research, collaboration emerges and transcends into a more targeted relational approach. The study, therefore, responds to the original aim

as conceptually illustrated in Figure 018 of Chapter 5 Section 5.4.7 and offers a slightly adapted version conceptually illustrated in Figure 019 below to answer the research questions.

From

Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive collaborative approach to enable market access and preparedness support for the sustainable growth of Black and Minority Community-led Micro-Small Enterprises.

To

Developing an asset-based, equitable system and culturally inclusive targeted relational relationship collaborative approach to enable market access and preparedness support for the sustainable growth of Black and Minority Community-led Micro-Small Enterprises.

Overall, a major contribution of this doctoral study is the theoretical development in advancing the understanding of the best approach to sustainable market access and growth of minority ethnic-led micro-small enterprises. A cultural perspective intertwined with systemic enablement enhanced by targeted relational relationships and targeted market support is presented which helps to address the socio-economic context of minority ethnics' exclusion from the process of public market opportunities. The discussion presented aids knowledge advancement of the complex issues related to minority ethnic market support engagement; issues such as lack of contextualised support, short-lived intervention, restricted access due to racial bias, cultural barriers, key network exclusions, capability bias and entrepreneurial time constraints. For policymakers, this study provides insight into the socio-economic capabilities of minority ethnic enterprises and the implications of procurement approaches in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of enterprise policy.

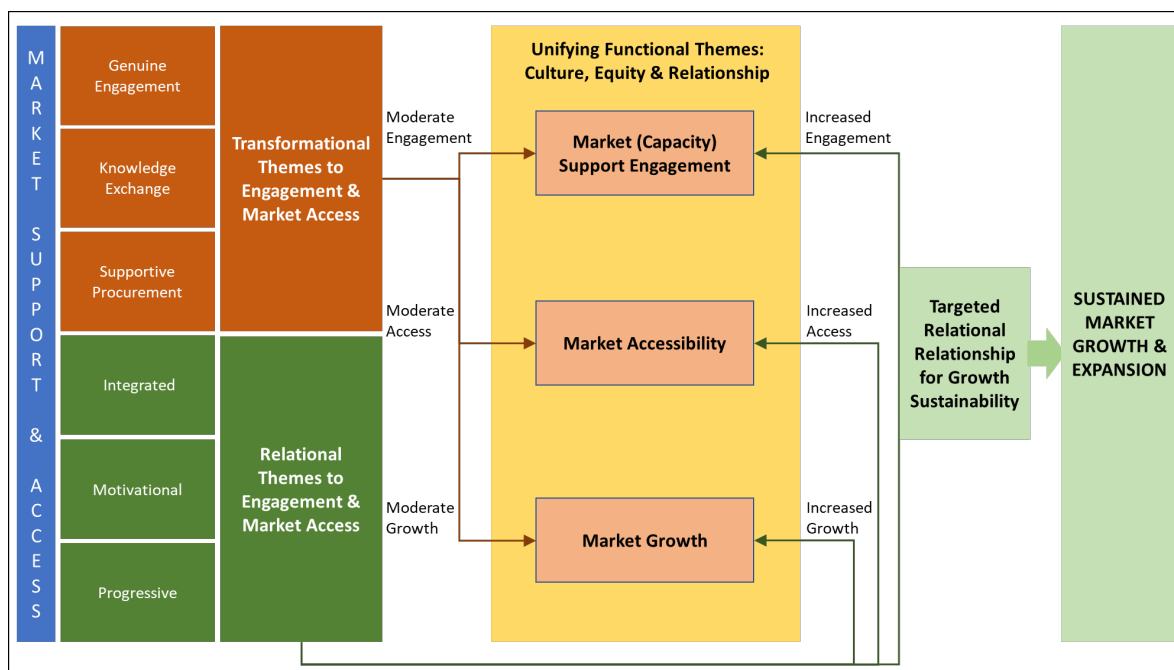


Figure 019: Unique conceptual framework to an equitable system and culturally inclusive targeted relational relationship approach to market support, access and sustainable growth of minority ethnic-led micro-small enterprises.

Developed by the author.

6.2 Study Limitations

Horta (2016) purported that the retrospective nature of a PhD by portfolio, similar to a PhD by publication, could present a limited opportunity for new research or exploration of different ideas. Despite the limitations of the portfolio-based doctoral studies, which this study employed, there are benefits that researchers have reported (Maxwell, 2003). With the evolution of knowledge and decentralisation in the global landscape, academe activities are increasingly connected with those of practitioners (Levine, 2020). Therefore, its relevance to real-world practice is acclaimed by researchers as practice-oriented research that aims to address concrete challenges faced by practitioners and provide specific, actionable recommendations (S Shorrock and C Williams, 2016). Acclaimed as a type of research that descends from abstract theory to tackle actual problems encountered in real-life settings (J Alpenberg and D P Scarbrough, 2021). Thus, by focusing on practical implications, this research can directly inform policymakers and practitioners about effective instruments and approaches to address societal challenges (E de Weert and F Leijnse, 2010).

Furthermore, the qualitative study employed in this study is not without criticism (Antaki et al., 2002). Conversely, it has been documented as a contributor to quality standards development (V Braun and V Clarke, 2016). Consequently, as mentioned

in the methodology chapter, the approach to data collection from the sample size of 39 fully engaged businesses across the three projects was grounded in a qualitative form. The project participants were drawn through non-probability (purposive and snowball) sampling (V Braun and V Clarke, 2019). This supported gathering richly textured data relevant to the studied phenomenon (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the question of appropriate sample size in qualitative research has dogged researchers for many decades (S A Mthuli, F Ruffin and N Singh, 2021). However, Braun et al., (2016) documented the credibility of size appropriateness can be assumed as adequate if the research question(s) is answered.

The doctoral study builds on and adopts a real qualitative methodology, allowing the author to inductively analyse and interpret the contribution of a new and unique emerging theory. Therefore, this systematically grounded qualitative approach enabled richly textured data gathering to inform the development of the theoretical and conceptual framework. Thus helping lay a foundation for further research in minority-ethnic micro-small businesses' equitable access to procurement opportunities.

Nonetheless, the author recognises the limitations of a qualitative study, particularly for generalizability. The two case-studied entities are public sector organisations. Future studies in the UK could test the model in private corporation procurement opportunities, which might present valuable insights into the private-market generalizability. However, the rich knowledge and layered conceptual framework could present a case for private-market transferability (K Vasileiou, J Barnett, S Thorpe and T Young, 2018, p. 14). Defined as '*the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts*' (Anney, 2014, p. 277). Allowing them to make connections between elements of the study and their own experiences. For further insight into generalizability or not from public-market procurement.

6.3 Further Research

As stated above, the research is not without its limitations. However, this study's theoretical and conceptual frameworks lay a good foundation for future research. Our findings could be extended by conducting a longitudinal post-doctoral study to investigate the long-term impact of the targeted relational relationships on the study participants' turnover compared to their White counterparts. To provide valuable insights into trends and patterns. Similarly, the study could be extended by testing the generalizability of the findings in private corporation procurement opportunities in the UK. Furthermore, an understanding of the enterprise policies the government could adopt to bolster the mechanisms for the long-term impact of the targeted relational relationships on ME-MSEs' comparable sustainability.

Chapter Seven – The Self-Reflection

7.1 Author's Self-reflection

A self-reflective strategy is employed to aid the author's learning and practice development. Given there are several models such as Borton's model (1970), Gibb's model (1988), John's model (2009), Cottrell Core model (2010) and more. John's and Correll's models are the best fit to aid engagement in appropriately designed reflectivity for this study, unlike the other two more suited to fledgling reflectors. Correspondingly to the study level, the author's choice of Correll (2010) will enable a higher level of reflection to generate a deeper understanding of the experiential journey. This model is ideal for reflection for those undertaking postgraduate studies.

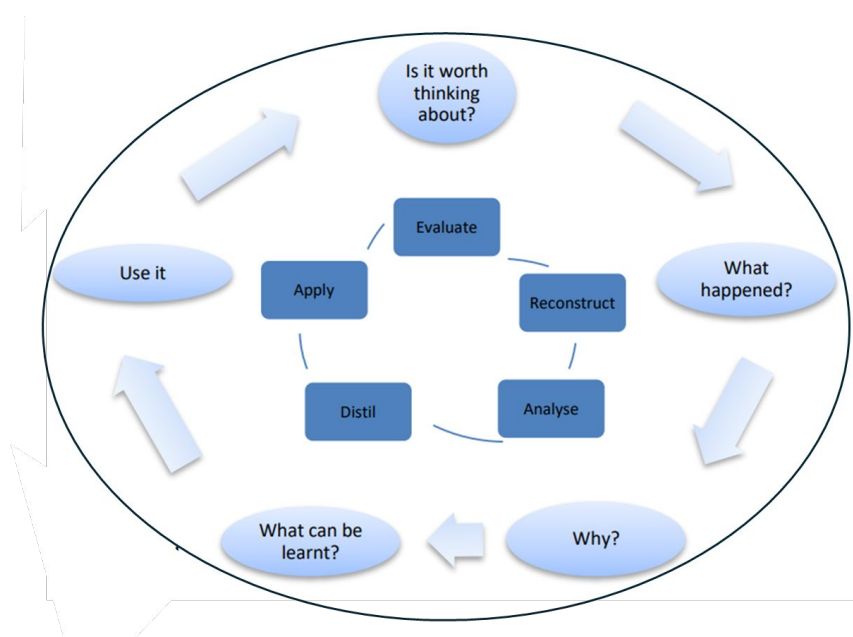


Figure 020: Cottrell's Core Reflective Model

Evaluation: the author's involvement with the three projects was both significant and important to them because it brings together their 20 years of field experience. Allowing them a close and strategic-focused working association with commissioners (local authorities) and the community (ethnic-led businesses and intermediary organisations) to effect change. As an opportune mechanism to learn from practice and utilise theoretical knowledge to retrospectively examine the three projects to inform and contribute unique knowledge to the sector. The author was involved in all aspects of the three projects. Taking on Project One as the lead consultant at the initial stage of just under two months into BSWN being commissioned by BCC. With involvement in all aspects of the support activities and facilitation of external contributor's input. To aid sector (social care) specialist knowledge. To impact the

participants, of which 16 of the 22 fully engaged. In addition to co-chairing the steering group meetings. As well as facilitating masterclasses and peer support sessions delivered by the commissioners and external supporters.

Equally instrumental in Project Two following a contract agreement between ARE and the Council. Allowing the author to contribute to the delivery model informed by emerging learning from project one. Again, a lead consultant on the project but later supported by a consultant colleague who provided marketing and comms knowledge where the need was identified by the author. However, a scoping exercise had been conducted by an ARE member during the early stages of discussion with the Council. The author later re-conducted an exercise with an in-depth conversational engagement with the 12 organisations who successfully joined the project, informing the initial diagnostic assessment data. With post-diagnostic was conducted with the nine fully engaged, excluding the 3 early dropouts. In addition, to the vast range of customised support in business strategy, planning, financial, partnerships, tender sourcing and bidding. The author solely led all Action Learning Sets involving all 9 participants in the most suited sets to their needs. And significant contribution to the direct delivery of masterclasses.

Lastly, on Project Three, commissioned by ARE, the author was involved in all aspects of the project activities, from application assessment to interview pitch to onboarding and support. Even though there were two consultants on the project, two-thirds (11) of the 17 selected organisations received a 'conversational' financial and eligibility assessment at the onset to commence the client-consultant relationship. However, 3 dropped out. Additionally, the six allocations to the consultant colleague were referred to the author. To benefit from the much broader scoop of support activities, particularly business strategising and planning, financial planning, tender sourcing and bidding. Leading the author to engage all 14 organisations through a range of support mechanisms. The colleague's portfolio covered marketing and comms. In addition, the author solely led all Action Learning Sets involving all 14 participants in the most suited sets to their needs. And significant contribution to the direct delivery of masterclasses.

All three projects were evaluated. Project one was evaluated by the BSWN senior researcher, who conducted interviews with stakeholders (author, participating organisations, commissioners and other contributors). The author co-cited the report. Projects two and three were externally evaluated by an independent organisation commissioned by ARE. The author contributed to the process at all stages, including the initial project evaluation meeting, supply of gathered data from participants, mid-evaluation meeting, and direct interview of the author by the evaluator. Other contributors were the ARE project director, the project administrator, and the

consultant colleague. The Council project lead was unable to be interviewed due to a long-term absence through illness. However, the evaluation captured direct feedback from a meeting hosted by the Council in September 2022 to enable Council staff and councillors to hear directly from the participants.

Considering the author's professional passion in the subject area, this reflective moment has given them a palpable experience reflectively translated into knowledge to impact the future in supporting strategic commissioners in equitable and inclusive market access and sustainable growth.

Reconstruction: accepting the opportunity to support Project One and being faced with an unexpectedly high level of the community's cynicism of any positive outcomes due to their experiences. Propelled a mission of relationship building between the community and commissioners. Inadvertently, an additional disconnect was encountered among the authority's officers with a divergent lens between commissioning and procurement officers. Compounding the relationship-building mission. Necessitating tactical ways to overcome. Particularly by an increased level of interaction without overbearing. Using the initially 2-monthly, later monthly, steering group meetings as a platform to win trust. Providing ongoing intelligence from the participating organisations to the authority and vice versa. Additionally, inviting both sides of the officials to meetings to enable inclusive conversation. Later, moved into a whole group (community and officers) in a workshop to engage, learn and share intelligence. A game-changer to the journey of trust building. Further deepened with the contract extension from one to two years. On reflection, the approach delivered the expected result.

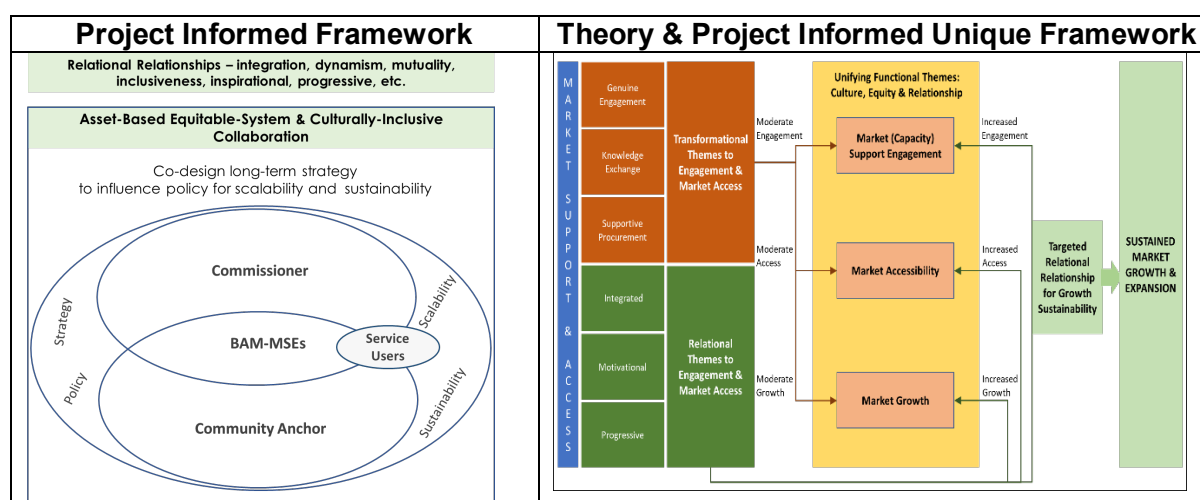
Conversely, the most significant challenge faced in project two was the participant's time availability, even though opined that the Council's support could have included financial. This impacted the early dropouts and, to a lesser extent, some of the initial reluctance of the eventually fully engaged. The author's approach was a deeper, highly personalised supportive intervention from the onset. With tangible actions and product development to support the strategic and operational aspects of their businesses. The increasing knowledge expansion and the author's flexibility in engagement and learning process began to engender greater commitment and interactions. Culminating in a request for longer support and one of the contributory factors to contract deadline extension. Nevertheless, the trust-building between community and authority was similarly needful. Fostered by relayed feedback from project meetings between the ARE project team and the Council's team. Additionally, the two in-person network events hosted by the Council allow the participating organisations to interact

directly with the officers. Both were positively received, with the participants requesting more of such. On reflection, the highly personalised support delivered impactful outcomes, as reported by the participants to the council at the events.

Lastly, project three participants received financial support and highly focused personalised support. To overcome the most significant challenge of setting up/running a viable business and/or successful launch of their business ideas. Similar to project two, resource constraints, particularly time availability, were limitations. Compounded by business trade knowledge deficit on many levels. The author's approach was a highly focussed step-by-step personalised support throughout the duration. Using a business product like planning to expand knowledge across a raft of business processes and opportunities. In some cases, using their customer data intelligence to expand their grant application sourcing knowledge. Organically and systematically impacting increased confidence, knowledge, tangible product developments such as their first comprehensive business plan, financial plan, expending and reporting grant awards and more. Further leading to exposure to partnership brokerages. Similarly, it culminated in a request for longer support with a contract deadline extension. Conversely, the trust-building opportunity between the community and authority commenced very early on through the induction event to the project. With ongoing feedback from project meetings between ARE and the Council's teams. Additionally, an in-person network event hosted by the Council allows the participating organisations to interact directly with the officers and other businesses from Project Two. It was a well-received event, with a request for more of such by the participants. In particular, a request for early engagement with other businesses should be considered in future projects. On reflection, the highly focussed personalised support delivered impactful outcomes, as reported by the participants in many instances. However, the lack of formal diagnostic assessment, at pre and post-support, was highlighted by the participants and, on reflection, could have benefited the group. In addition to qualitative feedback, it could have provided comparative impact levels.

Analysis: the author was deeply amazed as emerging themes unfolded during the theoretical criticality. As fit and gaps unfolded, the amazement deepened. As a prolific bid and report writer, the author has a wealth of experience in responding to strategic enquiries, business cases, etc. Mostly writing compelling cases to support a positive response. However, the author was genuinely led by the findings from extant literature and seriously shocked by the level of fit and the clearly identified gaps as they emerged. Their search for closet literature was extensive, with a continued process

beyond the literature review chapter. In cognisance of the ongoing publication of research papers, they conducted more searches to satisfy their curiosity. However, retrieved papers on perusal were already study contributors. The experience became much more enjoyable than had been anticipated, reinforcing in their minds the plausibility of scientific systematic research employed in this study. Equally, they employed their conceptual development skills as the projects progressed and learning emerged which informed the collaborative approaches and relationship properties. As seen in volume one – functional, transformational and relational collaboration. The relational approach, as depicted below was retrospectively examined by theoretical knowledge to develop the study’s unique knowledge as depicted below of targeted relational relationship to market engagement and sustainable growth for ME-MSEs.

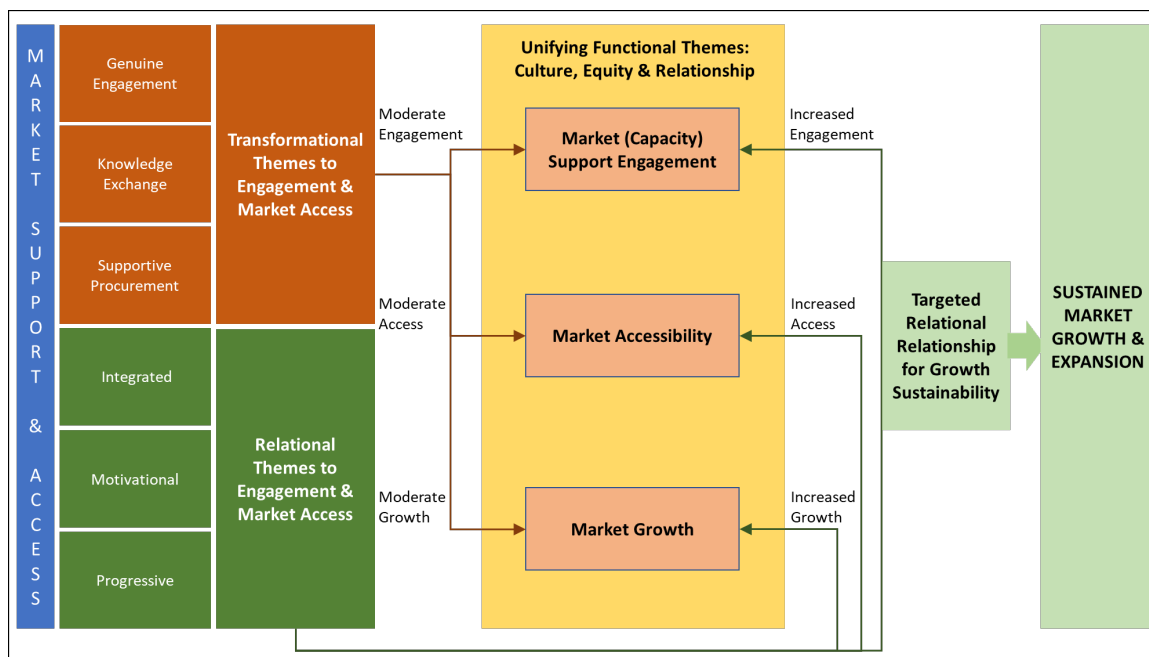


Distilling: as part of the reflectivity, the author considers what worked well and could be of future use. The unique best practices from each project collectively inform best practices. Particularly the high-level participation at the steering group meetings to encourage ongoing intelligence sharing and feedback between the community and authority. The pre-and post-diagnostics enable comparative impact measures as an additional success metric. Factoring sufficient time for personalised intensive support if meaningful outcomes are to be achieved as seen in all three projects. Furthermore, a blended financial and non-financial support. Finally, a targeted relational engagement pre- (from induction) and post-award (grant or commissioned services).

Application: the combination of the knowledge obtained from the theoretically grounded doctoral study and practice knowledge gives the author credibility in the field. To take this new approach of equitable systems and culturally inclusive targeted relational relationship to the marketplace to support commissioners and funders in ME-MSEs’ engagement in market access and sustainable growth.

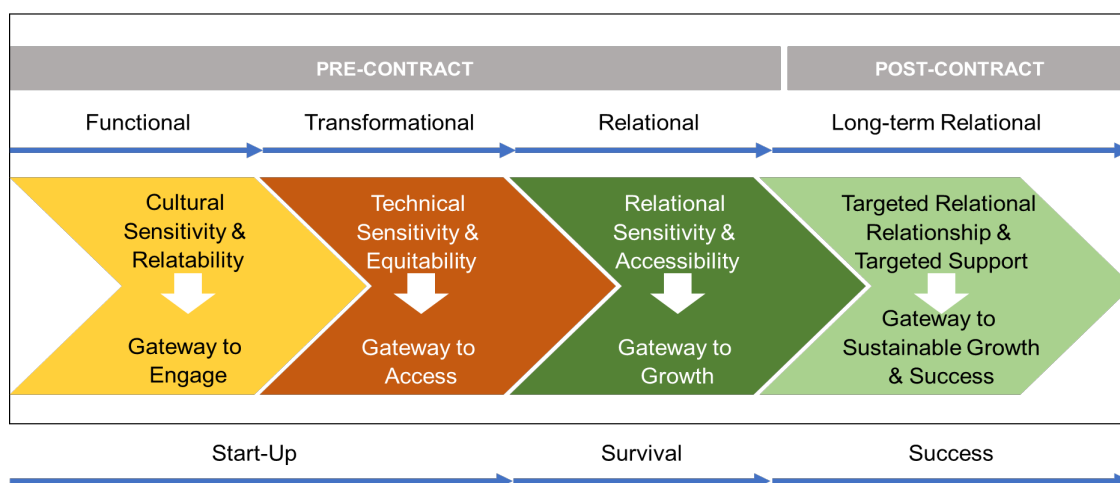
7.2 Next Step

The next step is to implement the theoretical lessons from this doctoral study and apply them in practice. From a practical and applied perspective, some of this has already been implemented because the author is a practitioner. However, the opportunity to fully explore the consequences beyond the scope of this study is imminent. To begin with, the unique conceptual framework developed by the author, which informed the new knowledge in the field, has been translated into a logically digestible framework, as shown below.



Unique conceptual framework to an equitable system and culturally inclusive targeted relational relationship collaborative approach to market support, access and sustainable growth of ME-MSEs.

Asset-Based Equitable-System & Culturally-Inclusive Targeted Relational Relationship To Market Access & Sustainable Growth Of Minority Ethnic-Led MSEs



Digestible Theoretically Grounded Framework for Market Access & Sustainable Growth of ME-MSEs.

Word count: 54,559

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Functional Themes to Business Support Approaches Extant Literature Thematic Analytical Table

BUSINESS SUPPORT APPROACHES (2.4.3)												
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Literature	Hossain et al., 2022	Pan et al., 2022	Bates et al., 2022	Monder Ram, 2019	Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Bates et al., 2016	K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	DE Armanios et al., 2017	
Participational Themes to Market (Capacity) Support Engagement	Relationship	Trust	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Trust plays an important role for EMBs in seeking external support. Group trust is embedded in some ethnic groups in order to succeed in business because members of that group consider them to be a part of that group and they like to help each other.	Trust is developed as a cumulative product of repeated past social interactions. Trust, in turn, develops a common understanding of mutual commitment and cooperation .		Appointment of an outreach worker with the trust of the local communities. Trusted community organiser enabled EMB engagement with the mainstream. Establishing proactive trust-based relationships with traders.	Buyers are specifically requesting minority firms. This assures minority entrepreneurs that their race and ethnic background will not be viewed negatively.				
		Relationship	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018		Co-ethnic relationships often feature smoother communication. Institutional intermediaries are established to help build relationships with buyers. Trust, in turn, develops a common understanding of mutual commitment and cooperation as a basis for strong relationships		Services promoted by developing relationships with a wide range of intermediaries led to a corresponding substantial increase in the number of interactions with minority businesses on business support engagement.	Establish exchange relationships with minority businesses for opportunities and increasingly engaging with them to raise the purchasing power of those communities and to cultivate current and future consumers	Personal relationships between firm owners and their financiers were front and centre	Firms, due to fear of reputational damage, had no supply relations with public sector organisations even though there are benefits to be had from supplier relationships.	Institutional voids highlight gaps between sectors and the organizations and relationships that bridge them through intermediaries.	
		Network	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	Creating information networks, highlighting needs in the community. Minority businesses are particularly dependent on socialization opportunities for relationship building as they have historically encountered social exclusion and discrimination in networking event. Role models. To share success stories and best practices.	Promote socialization between EMBs and Buyers e.g. corporate members (i.e., connect-oriented activities) Minority businesses are particularly dependent on socialization opportunities for relationship building as they have historically encountered social exclusion and discrimination in networking event. Role models. To share success stories and best practices.	Provided the network through which corporations listed their procurement needs	Connecting the businesses to wider business networks means connecting to the communities in which they operate (Mickiewicz et al., 2016, p8) MBs limited product market access due to their exclusion from key networks and information. Many networks are established and maintained based on the social status of their members, and since Blacks and Hispanics are considered to have lower status, they may not be included in some networks and may lack access to the information available to network members	Networks are key avenues of information regarding business and market opportunities. MBs limited product market access due to their exclusion from key networks and information.	Minority entrepreneurship is embedded in a social context, channelled and facilitated or constrained and inhibited by peoples' positions in social networks	Two businesses had low value contracts that did not require them to go through a formal tendering process, with their engagement being through word-of-mouth, networking, and reputation. Firms who had developed bridging networks had been able to win contracts. Recommendations via well-established networks. Firm that won a local authority contract through established networks.	Provide extensive services e.g., networking events	
		Peer support	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	Peer networks generate social capital (employees, local customers and financial resources) and contribute to the success. Interdependence with other members of the group who are located close to the network	Peer support fosters information exchange with and mutual learning from other minority members. Transfer of best practices from other minority members. Gain peer assistance by sharing implicit knowledge about dealing with the challenges of doing business with large corporations. Minority businesses leverage co-ethnic relationships to learn together and improve their capacity to exploit business opportunities.		Action Learning Site encouraged individual reflection and re-evaluation of business goals. Peer-to-peer business mentoring support Peer-to-peer guidance in business development and community links					
	Equitable Systems	Cultural Inclusion	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Distinctive cultural approach to entrepreneurship. Distinctive traditional values	Co-ethnic relationships often feature smoother communication and a higher sense of loyalty and friendship because of shared cultural backgrounds and common languages.		Engagement is supplemented by culturally appropriate outreach activities i.e. the appointment of outreach worker with the trust of the local communities. Importance of building an inclusive culture of business support. Services promoted by developing relationships with a wide range of intermediaries led to a corresponding substantial increase in the number of interactions with minority businesses on business support engagement	MEs may choose to participate in preferred procurement programs and to serve government and commercial clients because they see others who look like them succeeding				
		Capability support	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Build business capabilities via training and education designed to improve long-term viability e.g. internal management skills and processes Minority businesses leverage co-ethnic relationships to learn together and improve their capacity to exploit business opportunities. Enhancing EMBs' abilities through 'develop-oriented' activities to meet the needs of buyers.	The policy bundle created opportunities to acquire advanced education and skills. Educational gains stand out as perhaps the most important cause of the ongoing 21st-century transformation of the minority business community	Developing relationships with minority businesses to engage and contextual their business support needs. Those with extensive information are more likely to learn about a wider range of product markets. EMBs need three resources - money, market and management skills to succeed. Closely working with participants in the implementation of initiatives.	As a result of the procurement programs ethnic firms gradually built capacity and took on even larger contracts	Section- and product-specific knowledge were found to be key enablers of those small firms that were able to engage with the public sector. One-to-one, customized, tailored and firm-specific intensive business support of up to 20 hours. Support on how to use the online procurement platforms for searching and identification of the public sector contracts. Organisational policy development. Themed workshops on competitive tendering, writing a winning bid, public sector procurement, opportunities, and requirements	Small businesses were interested in having more tailored, diagnostic, one-to-one sessions with consultants to clarify issues of concern in tendering processes and requirements. Intermediaries helped entrepreneurs to gain business capabilities. Capability-building—that is, education and connections that entrepreneurs gain via participating with an intermediary enhances human and social capital, and so aids entrepreneurs. For technically skilled local entrepreneurs lacking business skills, institutional intermediaries can help build such skills, easing the path to government funding. Help entrepreneurs build the capabilities necessary to be commercially successful.		
		Opportunity access	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Giving minority businesses direct business opportunities and referrals to others.		Engagement is supplemented by culturally appropriate outreach activities i.e. the appointment of outreach worker with the trust of the local communities. Procurement programs enable MEs to identify opportunities to serve large profitable government and corporate clients. Many big corporations launched efforts to expand the number of minority business suppliers by establishing special programs within their procurement departments.	Increased access to information to raise awareness of opportunities to serve government and business customers. Initiatives enable opportunity identification, evaluation, and exploitation processes for EMBs. Preferential procurement programs create opportunities for MEs to move beyond personal services and retailing fields and into mainstream market	Providing business support for potential small suppliers, which helped to sensitise them to public procurement opportunities and build some threshold capacity. Underdeveloped human capital, lack of a track record in supplying large organisations, weaknesses in tendering, and unawareness of the public sector opportunities are reasons for non-engagement in opportunities. Small firms face potentially a viable opportunity structure in the public sector market. Themed workshops on tendering opportunities and requirements	Intermediary institutions connect early-stage entrepreneurs to extensive public resources. The capability-building benefit of intermediaries is likely to be important for individuals who have low-skill adequacy. While these entrepreneurs may have high context relevance such that they understand their local situation well, they are likely to be constrained in launching successful ventures by their limited business capabilities.		

Appendix 2 – Transformational Themes to Market Engagement and Access Extant Literature Thematic Analytical Table

MARKET ACCESS APPROACHES (2.4.4)												
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Literature	Hossain et al., 2022	Pan et al., 2022	Bates et al., 2022	Monder Ram, 2019	Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Bates et al., 2016	K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2016	DE Armanios et al., 2017	
Transformational Themes to Engagement & Market Access Medium-sized common-growth serving	Relationship	Relationship/ Connection	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2016 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Institutional intermediaries are established to help build relationships with buyers. Relationship building with corporate members is positively associated with firm growth as it increases the chances of minority businesses to be considered as suppliers (Bourit & Li, 2021). Relationships with corporate members can help alleviate capability concerns.		Supplier diversity initiatives (Supplier Development East Midlands, 2004; now Minority Supplier Development UK) to facilitate linkages between EMBs and the public and private sectors.	Establish exchange relationships with minority businesses for market opportunities.	Personal relationships between firm owners and their financiers were front and centre	Firms, due to fear of reputational damage, had no supply relations with public sector organisations even though there are benefits to be had from supplier relationships.	Connections with government officials until legal systems formalize, and institutional intermediaries until commercial and regulatory institutions can better facilitate market exchange.	
		Cultural Inclusion	Cultural/ Sensitivity	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Distinctive cultural approach to entrepreneurship.	Minorities are more likely than non-minorities to seek homophilic relationships.		Corporation supplier diversity approach sensitive to the particular circumstances of the members	Assisting minority businesses by screening out front companies, supplying dedicated expert staff.			
	Equitable Systems	Market Accessibility (Lower barriers)		Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Lower market access barriers through supplier initiative (National Minority Supplier Development Council) encouraged experienced, highly educated minorities to pursue business ownership.		Promoting supplier chain relationships with MBEs for progress towards the goal of supplier chain diversity would take a variety of forms- collaborative contracts, peer support in business development, community links, etc. Less demanding criteria to supply public and corporate sector organisations.	Assisting minority businesses by screening out front companies, targeting stronger minority businesses, easing bonding requirements, downsizing and unbundling contracts, supplying dedicated expert staff, and paying minority businesses promptly.	Altering incentives after the market access of MBEs	Streamlining and simplifying the public procurement processes. Need for change in public procurement culture by streamlining and simplifying the tendering process and the buying practices of public sector organizations.	Institutional intermediaries significantly expand market access beyond the well-studied politically connected locals to include new arrivals (i.e., returnees) and the talented (i.e., local elites).
			Genuine Engagement	Engagement (market)	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2016 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	Many minority businesses develop their initial protocols, procedures, and relationships by participating in government procurement programs, thus showing their readiness to supply to the mainstream market. Through socialisation, minority businesses are able to demonstrate their values, norms, and goals towards the achievement of mutual engagement.	Reducing traditional barriers substantially to engage in product market	Utilise a range of engagement efforts to gain interactions with the diverse communities of minority businesses. Trusted community organiser enabled EMB engagement with the mainstream. Engagement is supplemented by culturally appropriate outreach activities i.e. the appointment of outreach worker with the trust of the local communities.	Procurement programs translates into more diversified supply chains and increased engagement with Black and Hispanic communities for participating corporations. MEs may choose to participate in preferred procurement programs and to serve government and commercial clients because they see others who look like them succeeding. Buyers are specifically requesting minority firms (Haynie et al. 2009). This assures minority entrepreneurs that their race and ethnic background will not be viewed negatively.	Improving the information available to minority entrepreneur after the public-sector procurement market access.	Tailored business support for smaller firms as this appeared influential in changing the mind-set of smaller suppliers positively toward engagement with the public sector. Sector- and product-specific knowledge were found to be key enablers of those small firms that were able to engage with the public sector. Provided relevant information on the public sector procurement process to enable engagement and access.	Entrepreneurs are ill-equipped to identify the most commercially promising technologies so institutional intermediaries set up as a means to bolster connections between government resources and entrepreneurs and to help entrepreneurs build the capabilities necessary to be commercially successful. Intermediaries provide extensive services (e.g., management training, networking events, and business model assistance) that educate entrepreneurs to produce goods that could succeed.
	Knowledge Exchange	Knowledge		Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	MBs joined programme for knowledge acquisition Information flow and knowledge sharing engender trust and legitimacy Positive outcomes are achieved as a result of knowledge sharing	Educational gains stand out as perhaps the most important cause of the ongoing 21st-century transformation of the minority business community		Knowledge exchange activities between EMBs and public and private sectors to promote diversification or breakouts	Certain opportunities become available through knowledge transfer Expanded knowledge of minority entrepreneurs to enable them to see more opportunities in the business and government sectors.		Gain knowledge to align and integrate resources and capabilities EMBs possessed thereby helping them to translate an opportunity into a realized business transaction. Firms lacked sufficient knowledge of the public sector market on how it buys and the tendering requirements.	Entrepreneurs obtain public resources via intermediaries: business skill training, managerial skills, market knowledge, etc. The capability-building benefit of intermediaries is likely to be important for individuals who have low skill adequacy. While these entrepreneurs may have high content relevance such that they understand their local situation well, they are likely to be constrained in launching successful ventures by their limited business capabilities.
			Information flow	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2016 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018	Joined programme for information Information flow and knowledge sharing engender trust and legitimacy Positive outcomes are achieved as a result of information flow			Information on EMBs came from specialist ethnic organisations. Those with extensive information are more likely to learn about a wider range of product markets.	Increased access to information increased EMBs access to the product market. Those with extensive information are more likely to learn about a wider range of product markets.	Improving the information available to minority entrepreneur after the public-sector procurement market access	Provided relevant information on the public sector procurement process to enable engagement and access.	
	Supportive Procurement	Targeted access		Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	Many minority businesses develop their initial protocols, procedures, and relationships by participating in government procurement programs, thus showing their readiness to supply to mainstream markets (Bourit & Hill, 2015). Improving minority businesses' access to large purchasing organizations through supplier initiatives (National Minority Supplier Development Council) helps them overcome a major barrier. Selective/ Preferential participation. Active participation in intermediary-sponsored activities is vital. Exploiting preferential procurement opportunities entailed fundamentally transforming minority businesses	Lower market access barriers through supplier initiative (National Minority Supplier Development Council) encouraged experienced, highly educated minorities to pursue business ownership. Opening up procurement markets to minority vendors by listing their procurement needs and minority-owned firms listing their product offerings Black self-employment rates rose substantially in the years following program initiation, and gains were concentrated in those industries most involved in government contracting. Exploiting preferential procurement opportunities entailed fundamentally transforming minority		Corporation supplier diversity approach (initiatives) that is sensitive to the particular circumstances of the EMs. During the two-year pilot of the supplier initiative, membership doubled and commercial contracts between corporations and minority businesses were exchanged which were five times the cost of the initiatives. Procurement programs enable MBEs identify opportunities to serve large profitable government and corporate clients Procurement initiatives improve product market access for both high-growth and lower-growth entrepreneurs. Minority business certifications that allow them to participate in government set-asides and commercial supplier diversity programs.	Many big corporations launched efforts to expand the number of minority business suppliers by establishing special programs within their procurement departments. Well-designed preferential procurement programs may allow minority entrepreneurs to gain access to profitable product markets and lucrative customers. Improving the information available to minority entrepreneur after the public-sector procurement market access	Altering incentives to support market access of MBEs. The opportunity for MBEs to move beyond personal services and relating fields and into mainstream markets has been the legacy of preferential procurement programs (Bates 2015). Improving the information available to minority entrepreneur after the public-sector procurement market access	Streamlining and simplifying the public procurement processes by the participating local authorities and other public sector organisations. SME-friendly procurement policies in the UK, the EU, and elsewhere are also intended to have more small firms acting as public sector suppliers. Public procurement can be used by the government to assist small firms. Small firms face potentially a viable opportunity structure in the public sector market	Development of their market and institutional infrastructure. Firms that participated with public-private intermediaries gained access to public-sector knowledge that enabled them to upgrade their products. Intermediary certification of firms signals quality and status that benefit entrepreneurs.
			Interactive	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 K Woldeesenbet & Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017	Repeated interactions to build relationships. Building valuable resources (social capital) through relationship building. Minority businesses are particularly dependent on socialization opportunities for relationship building as they have historically encountered social exclusion and discrimination in networking events.			Services promoted by developing relationships with a wide range of intermediaries led to a corresponding substantial increase in the number of interactions with minority businesses on business support engagement				Small firms' engagement/non-engagement choices in the public sector market are an outcome of the intertwined interactions of the institutional environment, the market, and firm resources manifesting at unequal level of influence across firms. Hence customized, one-to-one business support, sector and product knowledge.

Appendix 3 – Relational Themes to Market Engagement and Growth Extant Literature Thematic Analytical Table

MARKET GROWTH APPROACHES (2.4.5)												
Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Literature	Hossain et al., 2022	Pan et al., 2022	Bates et al., 2022	Monder Ram, 2019	Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Bates et al., 2018	K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	DE Armanios et al., 2017	
Relational Themes to Engagement & Market Growth Medium to long-lived engagement	Relationship	Stronger Relationship	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Relationship building with corporate members is positively associated with firm growth as it increases the chances of minority businesses to be considered as suppliers Relationships with corporate members can help alleviate capability concerns.		More quality time to develop personal familiarity into trustworthy relationships	Increasingly established exchange relationships engagement for opportunities with MBs to raise the purchasing power of those communities and to cultivate current and future consumers	Personal relationships between firm owners and their financiers were front and centre	Embeddedness of small businesses in bridging or well-established networks.	"Politically-connected" locals gain public-sector resources. These entrepreneurs who have both high task relevance and skill adequacy can bypass institutional intermediaries, and gain access to public sector resources directly.	
		Inclusion	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018		Government contract provides additional legitimacy by demonstrating a minority firm's competency in the face of higher social barriers.		Building an inclusive culture of long-term engagement with agencies. Cross-sector partnership with local authorities, minority ethnic associations, researchers in design and delivery of business support to MBs	Buyers are specifically requesting minority firms. This assures minority entrepreneurs that their race and ethnic background will not be viewed negatively. Corporations acquire greater flexibility in their operations with more diversified supply chains because including smaller ME businesses allows them to adjust the flow of their production more easily.		Co-production of tailored support knowledge by involving consultants, funder, small businesses, researchers, and the project team positively influenced the mindset shift of minority businesses from ambivalent to aspirant to engaged.		
	Equitable	Growth Access Opportunity	Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018					Access to a market and access to financing, which are two of the key building blocks for successful small business	Expanded product market access produced initially by the programs allows minority firms to achieve a critical threshold level beyond which entrepreneurial success and, in some cases, growth is increasingly likely. Preferential programs increased MBs' favourable assessment of the opportunities to serve businesses and government clients.		Smaller orders by public sector purchasers enhance small businesses' chances of winning business in a highly competitive marketplace where value for money is a prime consideration	
		Integrated	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018 DE Armanios et al., 2017		Strong relationships are established through mutual commitment and cooperation As minority businesses build more relationships with corporate members and with other minority members, we expect them to experience greater growth. Longer and higher-quality interactions with large corporations		Long-term engagement with statutory agencies	Establish exchange relationships with minority businesses for opportunities and increasingly engaging with them to raise the purchasing power of those communities and to cultivate current and future consumers	Personal relationships between firm owners and their financiers were front and centre	Embeddedness of small businesses in bridging or well-established networks alongside their developed human capital enabled them to secure public sector contracts.	Well-connected entrepreneurs can leverage their political ties to acquire funding	
	Motivational	Inspiring/Motivational	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018		Role models. To share success stories and best practices. Transfer of best practices from other minority members.	Longer bid lead times to help EMBs get more work from public procurement opportunities. Reduction or waiver of required bonding (applicable constraints have lessened) Preferences targeting minority vendors to continue until a playing field was achieved		Championing of exemplar firms embedded in the ethnic community to spur the involvement of local EMBs	Buyers are specifically requesting minority firms. This assures minority entrepreneurs that their race and ethnic background will not be viewed negatively. Preferential programs increased MBs' favourable assessment of the opportunities to serve businesses and government clients. MEs may choose to participate in preferred procurement programs because they see others who look like them succeeding		The co-production of knowledge by working with consultants, funder, small businesses, researchers, and the project team was instrumental in the delivery of tailored business support and its positive influence on changing the mindset of some ambivalent firms into aspirants and to engaged firms.	
		Long-term	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018		Training designed to improve long-term viability e.g. internal management skills and processes within minority businesses. Intense in-training discussions and team project collaborations, providing longer and higher-quality interactions with large corporations.		Long-term engagement with supply chain intermediary business support agencies and statutory agencies.	Expanded product market access for MEs increased engagement with Black and Hispanic communities for participating corporations and the long-term economic rationales are particularly important		Firms win contracts because of long work experience in the public sector market.		
	Progressive	Mutuality	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019		Trust, in turn, develops a common understanding of mutual commitment and cooperation as a basis for strong relationships. Minority businesses leverage co-ethnic relationships to learn together and improve their capacity to exploit business opportunities.		Corporation supplier diversity approach sensitive to the particular circumstances of the members. Gains to the wider community as members mentored aspiring entrepreneurs. Closely working with participants in the implementation of initiatives.					
		Shared values	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018		Distinctive traditional values. Shared characteristics, including geographical and ancestral origins, but particularly cultural traditions and languages Shared narratives set clearly defined norms and shared expectations that help develop trust between minority businesses and corporate institutions (social capital's relational dimension). Shared values and identity are reinforced as a result of information flow. Socialisation opportunities allow minority businesses to demonstrate their values, norms, and goals towards achieving mutual engagement.			MEs may choose to participate in preferred procurement programs and to serve government and commercial clients because they see others who look like them succeeding				
		Growth	Pan et al., 2022 Bates et al., 2022 Shelton & Minniti, 2018 Bates et al., 2018		As minority businesses build more relationships with corporate members and with other minority members, we expect them to experience greater growth.	Increased growth in minority businesses generally active in government or corporate procurement markets.		By expanding market access, preferential procurement programs appeared to enable minority entrepreneurs to participate in the markets best suited to their growth aspirations and personal capabilities. Government procurement initiatives open a necessary, albeit not sufficient, critical mass of otherwise unavailable opportunities to them that makes their growth and survival more feasible.	Well designed, procurement programs effectively enable some MEs to achieve rapid expansion (higher-growth entrepreneurs) and others to overcome personal limitations and establish viable enterprises (lower-growth entrepreneurs)			
		Collaborative	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019 K Woldeesenbet & I Worthington, 2018		Repeated encounters from participating in intermediary-sponsored activities help MBs develop collaborative bonds of mutual norms with their interacting parties. Develop-oriented activities offer participants more opportunities to engage with corporate members in intense in-training discussions and team project collaborations, providing longer and higher-quality interactions with corporate members.		As a result of the supplier initiatives, there have been instances of minority businesses combining to bid for corporate contracts. Project also helped MBs to work together to solve common problems.		The co-production of knowledge by working with consultants, funder, small businesses, researchers, and the project team was instrumental in the delivery of tailored business support and its positive influence on changing the mindset of some ambivalent firms into aspirants and to engaged firms.			

Appendix 4: Market Capacity Support, Engagement and Access Literature Gap and Unique Contribution to Knowledge

Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Combined Literature	%		Closet Literature	%		Projects	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3
Participational Theme	Relationship	Peer support	Hossain et al., 2022 Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	38%		Pan et al., 2022	33%		100%	<p>"The Housing Peer Learning was very useful."</p> <p>"I want to be part of the peer network - BCC pre-tender support/CSS framework and housing strategy/commissioning intention."</p> <p>"I want to be part of the following external support network - financial management and scaling; and marketing."</p>	<p>"Exploration through peer network added value to my business because it gave me ideas on what I need to do to boost my company, speaking out, more insights into what I could do, scaling up and even doing tutorials on YouTube."</p> <p>"It made me see some other businesses' perspectives. Being in your own business, sometimes you don't see what other people see."</p> <p>"Provided us with more information about how we present our proposals. We have now tailored our proposal, with minimal yet informative content safeguards against time-wastage and loss of potential income."</p> <p>"The sessions gave me insight into what other businesses are doing and what I could do better as a small business."</p> <p>"Overall, ALS gave me ideas from other people and businesses, the challenges they were facing and how I can prevent facing such challenges."</p>	<p>"I find ALS interesting as a way of solving mutual problems."</p> <p>"This (ALS) is really powerful, to get so many people (peers) in a room is really hard. Helped me think outside the box."</p> <p>"ALS, absolutely a wonderful session. I was so looking forward to it. It's like market research in a safe environment. I have learned so much and I am so grateful. All these things [...] I am taking away, and I am so excited."</p> <p>"It (ALS) has been really helpful in a way, as you say, it's in a safe space. When the business is all on your shoulders, it feels like am struggling to keep up and it is very helpful to be with you going through the journey and having your views. Lots of things for me to work on."</p>
Transformational Theme	Genuine Engagement	Listening	Monder Ram, 2019	13%			0%		100%	<p>"It's been interesting and nice to see someone not giving us a runaround, listening to what we said, coming back with actions."</p> <p>"I feel like I can contact a commissioner now and they will come back to me and take me seriously, because I have been on this programme. Whereas before I didn't feel like that. The programme actually got the commissioners to see me and because of this, I feel I am more valued and listened to."</p>	<p>"To be honest it's been nice talking to you, you have listened and given constructive feedback."</p> <p>"Networking to discuss and explore ideas made a difference to my business. Even listening to start-up businesses."</p> <p>"I felt I was being listened to even with all my interruptions."</p> <p>"You listened and understand my business and challenges"</p>	<p>"It was informative and you listened."</p>
Relational Theme	Progressive	Mutuality	Pan et al., 2022 Monder Ram, 2019	25%		Pan et al., 2022	33%		100%	<p>"The MIW collaboration has helped us. We have mutually benefited from one another."</p> <p>"Ways to overcome barriers to market participation is by creating an environment of learning and sharing (mutual)."</p> <p>"You know exactly where we're coming from, you understood the challenges and need for support."</p> <p>"The main thing I feel is that you understand where I'm coming from regarding where we are with the day centre."</p>	<p>"I think it brings huge value because you come from a journey yourself, it is more relatable. Having somebody from a BAM background, brings more compassion, understanding and empathy, wanting to support an organisation to support the wider BAM community. It is of immense value and cannot be fulfilled by a non-BAM consultant. The mindset block support, and the experiences, all add value. You gave me hope, Tutu."</p> <p>"The job can be quite lonely, so it's reassuring to get the perspective of other people that you are doing things right."</p> <p><u>What can be improved is:</u> "Learning from those who have done well and learning from them in areas that could benefit my business."</p>	<p>"I find ALS interesting as a way of solving mutual problems."</p> <p>"What can be improved is the desire for more in-person events and networking opportunities for mutual support."</p>

Appendix 5 – Targeted Relational Themes to Sustainable Market Growth Participant Feedback Analysis and Unique Contribution to Knowledge

Key Theme	Sub Themes	Project One	Project Two	Project Three
Targeted Relational Relationship for Growth Sustainability	Targeted Exploration	<p>"Exploring service provision through an agency model: "I was really surprised as to how much you can access, and I am really surprised that this information is not available out there. Especially for young black women and what Jo X said yesterday about how she could help to support us. Thank you."</p> <p>"Housing information for organisations providing Supported Living was most useful; helped me to understand and concentrate on service provision – which is supported living."</p>	<p>Business exploration in the peer network added value to my business, gave me ideas on what I need to do to boost my company, speaking out, more insights into what I could do, scaling up and even doing tutorials on YouTube."</p>	<p>"The programme allowed time to do the exploration that could not otherwise be done. Makes me think about the potential the business has to grow to a successful brand and entity."</p>
	Targeted B2B Connection	<p>"You guys have brought Business X and I together, the work is going to be a lot and it is going to be rewarding."</p> <p>"I am looking forward to the opportunity with Lloyds Bank and I am really pleased you picked growth and associated support areas."</p>	<p>"The difference the programme made is the B-2-B opportunities are happening between the Council-funded BAME organisations."</p> <p>"The difference the programme made is the partnership brokerage facilitated within and across both programmes by consultant."</p>	<p>"Thank you so very much Business X for your words of wisdom and if I have any questions I won't hesitate to reach out." "I am really happy, Tutu. I want to thank you for getting me in contact with Business X, that was top-notch."</p> <p>"Excellent brokerage experience. It added a further practical aspect that I can utilise after the programme ends. Useful due to the expertise and signposting being provided by Business X in the tech and social media field, an area that is relatively new to me. I will have a long-term relationship with Business X that will benefit my business."</p>
	Targeted Expansion Opportunity	<p>"The Housing Peer Learning were very useful to consider for our expansion"</p> <p>"Transition peer support was very useful. I want to apply for the Emergency Accommodation framework. Because I feel so confident to express and ask you questions it will help me to extend my business."</p> <p>"It looks like there is a sea of opportunities but as to how they are reaching us minority is like they don't have the reach. I am the only black person there – amongst about 11 people, and only 2 women. 9 white English men. The opportunities were really excellent."</p>	<p>"A beneficial session, making links with organisations within the programme to increase revenue for my business and the reflection from ALS with the suggested ways to increase my product line and visibility through the website and my YouTube channel."</p> <p>"What can be improved is for the council to provide connection to corporate businesses for expansion."</p>	<p>"In order to increase capacity, tapping into the ARE programme members will help us in the long run because it will help us build capacity."</p> <p>"What could be improved are practical ways the council could help towards increasing their visibility and links to opportunities in the borough. How and where to access other types of support and additional council resources and, more in-person network with other businesses and wider publicity of all these."</p>
Targeted (Ongoing) Peer Support Mentorship	<p>"Having support available to us in the future would be good for sustainability."</p> <p>"So helpful having someone with 1st hand experience [mentoring support]– helped to focus the minds to be strategic and sustainable. "</p> <p>"Supported living framework – I want to know everything about this. I want to know more from the organisations who have CQC outstanding ratings – I want to understand more about CQC inspection process. I want to be so prepared and implement the registration to the point that I am so prepared - confident, comfortable, high service standards, keeping and maintaining it."</p>	<p>"Small businesses will benefit if they have mentors afterwards to navigate future challenges and sustain growth."</p> <p>"It would add value to include mentorship support post-programme"</p> <p>"What can be improved is support to scale our business"</p>	<p>"Making lifelong connection with the ARE to access additional support"</p> <p>"How and where to access other types of support and additional council resources and, more in-person network with other businesses and wider publicity of all these."</p> <p>"The in-person network event with Islington Council in September explored linkages with agencies and other support available to the participating businesses, with practical suggestions about Council services, networks and other support. This was valued by businesses and recommended to be built into future programmes as far as possible."</p>	

Appendix 6 – Key barriers and constraints experienced by minoritised small businesses.

Key Themes	Themes	Sub-Themes	Hossain et al., 2022	Pan et al., 2022	Bates et al., 2022	Monder Ram, 2019	Shelton & Minniti, 2018	Bates et al., 2018	K Woldesenbet & I Worthington, 2018	DE Armanios et al., 2017
BARRIERS TO MARKET PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS		Constraints	<p>Discrimination can also be seen in the capital market and product markets.</p> <p>Cultural barriers, can hinder their progress in the economic markets and can exclude them from companies.</p>	<p>Minority businesses are often resource-constrained including time availability and need to wisely select the activities they participate.</p> <p>Social exclusion and discrimination in networking events.</p>	<p>Restricted access to mainstream markets interacting with low household wealth and limited access to financing have restrained the size and scope of the minority business community.</p> <p>Insufficient productive capacity to compete for the large contracts that typify government and corporate procurement</p>	<p>Lack of guidance, exclusion from business support networks, lack of knowledge from the corporates of how EBs operate.</p> <p>Severe market competition, punitive regulations and endemic racism.</p>	<p>Some buyers refused to provide valuable information to minority entrepreneurs because they did not view these entrepreneurs as capable.</p> <p>Unequal access to resources resulting from racial bias</p>	<p>Acquiring appropriate education, skills, and work experience, accessing financial capital, and exploiting market opportunities—overcoming these barriers—has traditionally been more difficult for minorities than for aspiring white entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Public sector market was simply inaccessible to EBs as potential suppliers. The main manifestations of this institutionalization were the complex, bureaucratic tendering/purchasing processes.</p> <p>The faceless nature of tendering in the public sector.</p> <p>The resource requirements for completing the tendering process were seen as considerable and costly.</p> <p>Concerned with the liability of newness and the lack of a track record.</p>	<p>A key dilemma facing entrepreneurs is how to finance their ventures.</p> <p>Lack of business skills. Lack of technical skills.</p>