

Catalysts for Creation: Key Drivers Behind Maternal Entrepreneurship

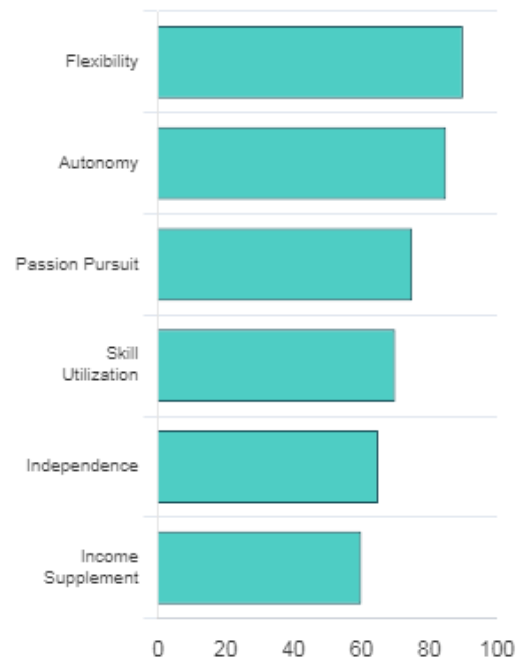
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I. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of entrepreneurship has witnessed a notable evolution with the emergence of "mompreneurship," a phenomenon defining mothers who integrate business ownership with their maternal responsibilities. This growing global trend has garnered increasing recognition as a distinct segment within women's entrepreneurship, largely driven by a compelling desire for flexibility and a harmonious work-life balance. The burgeoning interest in this area is underscored by the rapid increase in online searches for terms like 'mumpreneur' and 'mompreneur', which saw a dramatic rise from 120,000 hits in 2010 to over 5 million in 2020. This surge in public and academic attention, further highlighted by the explicit call for bibliometric mapping in recent studies, signifies a crucial shift in understanding. It indicates that mompreneurship is not merely a new label for women in business but represents a unique entrepreneurial pathway profoundly shaped by the specific demands and priorities of motherhood. This evolving recognition allows for more nuanced research and the development of targeted support mechanisms, moving beyond generic classifications of "women entrepreneurs" to address the specific push and pull factors, as well as the inherent constraints, tied to childcare and family responsibilities.

Key Individual Drivers

Specific factors like the desire for flexibility, passion pursuit, and skill utilization significantly influence the decision to become a mompreneur.



This report aims to systematically review existing literature on mompreneurship, synthesizing key findings, identifying common themes, persistent challenges, vital support systems, and their multifaceted contributions. The scope of this review encompasses an in-depth analysis of provided research materials, focusing on their abstracts, objectives, methodologies, findings, and conclusions to provide a comprehensive understanding of this dynamic field.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

An Overview of Mompreneurship Research

To provide a structured overview of the current academic discourse on mompreneurship, a tabular summary of the reviewed articles is presented below. This table consolidates essential information from each study, including author details, publication specifics, and a concise synthesis of their core contributions, methodologies, and key findings. This format facilitates a systematic comparison and understanding of the diverse perspectives and empirical evidence within the field.

Table 1: Summary of Reviewed Literature on Mompreneurship

Sr. No.	Author(s) & Affiliation(s)	Article Title	Key Aspects Summary
1	Regina Casteleijn-Osorno (University of Turku), Ulla Hytti (University of Turku)	Mompreneurship and resilience: Exploring entrepreneurship for mothers of children with additional needs	Entrepreneurship can offer flexibility and autonomy for mothers of children with additional needs, leveraging their resilience and networking skills, but requires institutional support like affordable childcare and fair household task distribution for success.
2	Anjana Bose (IIHM, India)	A STUDY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA	Mompreneurship in India is driven by educated women seeking financial independence and skill utilization due to low female workforce participation, but they face challenges like societal perception of lacking seriousness, limited financial access, and low profitability, making family support crucial.
3	Sizile Makola (University of South Africa)	Mumpreneurs' experiences of combining motherhood and entrepreneurship: A netnographic study	South African mumpreneurs, like their global counterparts, seek work-life balance and flexibility, facing challenges such as time management and being taken seriously, but uniquely benefit from domestic workers as a support system, underscoring the need for context-specific institutional support.
4	Nisreen Ameen (Royal Holloway, University of London, The University of Jordan), Vera Hoelscher (Royal Holloway, University of London), Niki Panteli (Royal Holloway, University of London, Norwegian University of Science and Technology)	Exploring how mumpreneurs use digital platforms' algorithms and mechanisms to generate different types of value	Digital platforms like Instagram enable UK mumpreneurs to generate diverse value—economic (customers, profit) and non-economic (engagement, cognitive, self-preservation)—by leveraging algorithms and adapting their online activity, challenging traditional views of entrepreneurial success.
5	Miss P Jeevitha (Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science for Women), Mrs. R. Kanyapriya (Sri Ramakrishna	WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF INDIA	Indian women entrepreneurs, despite societal undervaluation, are crucial for economic growth, with various central government loan schemes available to support their ventures, projecting significant job creation by 2030, though requiring further training and elimination of stereotypes.

	College of Arts & Science for Women), Dr. G. Anitha Rathna (PSG College of Arts & Science)		
6	Muthamma B U (CMR University), Dr. Ranjith Kumar.S (Kristu Jayanti College)	India's Women entrepreneurs - A Study	Women's entrepreneurship in India contributes to economic growth and job creation, but is hindered by gender-based obstacles like limited finance and societal thinking, often leading to "survival" businesses, necessitating continuous support and awareness programs.
7	P. Nel (Unitec, New Zealand), Alex Maritz (La Trobe University), Onnida Thongpravati (University of Tasmania)	Motherhood and entrepreneurship: The Mumpreneur phenomenon	Mumpreneurs balance motherhood and business for family and community, driven by work-life balance and personal fulfillment, but face challenges like lack of business knowledge, financial constraints, and societal stereotypes, requiring changes in the business environment and targeted support programs.
8	Arpita Agnihotri, Saurabh Bhattacharya	Drivers of mompreneurship: evidence from India	In India, mothers' entrepreneurial intention is positively influenced by perceived family support but negatively by firms' perceived family support policies, with self-efficacy enhancing the impact of both, highlighting the need for supportive environments.
9	Amandeep Dhaliwal (Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, India)	The Mompreneurship Phenomenon: An Examination of the Antecedents and Challenges of Mothers in Business	Mompreneurs are primarily motivated by work-life balance and intrinsic needs rather than solely financial gain, but consistently face challenges in balancing work and family, time management, and business operations, necessitating strong family support and strategic planning.
10	Margarida Maria Mendes Rodrigues (Instituto Europeu de Estudos Superiores), Ana Daniel (University of Aveiro), Mário Franco (University of Beira Interior)	WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT MUMPRENEURSHIP? A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS	Bibliometric analysis reveals that mumpreneurship research focuses on the dilemma of motherhood and the rising concept of mumpreneurs, emphasizing the importance of understanding entrepreneurship from mothers' perspectives due to their work-family balance challenges.
11	Zamandlovu Sizile Makola (University of South Africa)	Mumpreneurs' experiences of combining motherhood and entrepreneurship	South African mumpreneurs experience global challenges like work-life balance and time management, but their context-specific support, such as domestic workers, highlights the need

			for tailored institutional support in areas like financial acumen and marketing.
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III. KEY THEMES AND INTERPRETATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

This section synthesizes the findings across the reviewed articles, identifying recurrent patterns, areas of divergence, and deeper implications for the understanding of mompreneurship.

3.1. Motivations for Mompreneurship

The literature consistently identifies a range of motivations driving mothers towards entrepreneurship, often extending beyond traditional financial incentives. The most frequently cited and significant motivation is the pursuit of work-life balance and flexibility. Mompreneurs frequently seek entrepreneurship to gain autonomy and control over their time, allowing them to integrate their professional aspirations with demanding childcare responsibilities, a flexibility often absent in conventional employment structures. This desire reflects a fundamental need to reconcile professional ambition with the realities of family life.

Beyond mere flexibility, many mompreneurs are driven by intrinsic needs and a desire for personal fulfillment. This includes a strong urge to pursue passions, leverage their education and creativity, achieve personal independence, and enhance their social standing. For some, particularly those who have taken career breaks for motherhood, entrepreneurship offers a "second lease of life," providing a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth. This suggests that the overriding motivation for mompreneurs is often intrinsic and family-centric rather than purely financial. This indicates a fundamentally different definition of "success" for these entrepreneurs, one that encompasses personal satisfaction, family well-being, and social impact alongside financial viability. The literature explicitly states that the primary motivations for mompreneurship are to dedicate more time to families and fulfill intrinsic needs, rather than solely financial gain. This sentiment is echoed in other studies, which note that being a mompreneur is not solely about wealth creation. While financial independence is a factor, the utilization of education and status enhancement are also key drivers. This

consistent emphasis across multiple studies indicates that mompreneurs' value proposition extends beyond traditional business metrics. Consequently, support systems and policy interventions must be designed to address this unique blend of personal, social, and economic goals, rather than focusing exclusively on profit maximization.

While not always the primary driver, economic contribution remains an important motivation, with many mompreneurs seeking to supplement family income and achieve financial independence. This aspect is particularly salient in contexts like India, where women's overall workforce participation remains comparatively low. Furthermore, motherhood itself can serve as a catalyst for opportunity recognition and societal contribution. The direct experience of raising children often exposes mothers to unmet market needs, particularly in the realm of baby and child-related products or services. Some mompreneurs are also motivated by a broader desire to contribute positively to society or to establish a lasting legacy for their families.

3.2. Challenges Faced by Mompreneurs

Despite the compelling motivations, mompreneurs encounter a myriad of challenges that often complicate their entrepreneurial journey. Ironically, despite being a primary driver for entering entrepreneurship, achieving work-life balance remains the most significant and persistent challenge. Mompreneurs frequently report struggling with demanding schedules, the complexities of managing business tasks concurrently with childcare, and often resorting to working late nights or during children's school hours to cope.

Financial constraints and limited access to capital represent another recurring obstacle. Studies indicate a prevalent lack of initial investment, significant difficulties in securing formal loans, and a heavy reliance on personal savings to fund their ventures. This challenge is often exacerbated by a societal perception that mompreneurs lack "seriousness" in their business endeavors, leading to reluctance from financial institutions to provide necessary backing. This pervasive perception is not merely a social

inconvenience but a causal factor that creates and perpetuates significant systemic barriers. This societal bias directly impacts mompreneurs' ability to secure formal financial backing, as banks are often reluctant to lend to them, and to gain broader institutional support, thereby limiting their growth potential and often compelling many into informal or micro-businesses. This highlights a critical need for interventions that address underlying gender biases within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The explicit link between the "perception from others... that they lack 'seriousness'" and banks being "often reluctant to lend them finances" illustrates a direct cause-and-effect relationship. If mompreneurs are not perceived as serious business owners, they are less likely to receive the capital, mentorship, and formal recognition necessary for scaling their ventures, potentially trapping them in a cycle of limited resources and informal operations.

Furthermore, societal perceptions and stereotypes pose a significant hurdle. Mompreneurs frequently report not being taken seriously by potential clients, investors, or even members of their own families. A prevailing societal expectation often dictates that women should primarily fulfill caregiver roles, which can undermine their entrepreneurial credibility and hinder their professional advancement.

A lack of formal business knowledge and skills is also a common issue. Many mothers entering entrepreneurship may lack formal training in critical areas such as marketing, comprehensive business planning, and effective networking. This deficiency can lead to difficulties in customer acquisition, brand development, and achieving competitive differentiation in the market. Operational and logistical difficulties further compound these challenges, encompassing issues like efficient product sourcing, managing inventory (often necessitating a Just-in-Time approach due to limited home-based storage), ensuring timely delivery, handling product returns, and navigating the complexities of business travel. Finally, the emotional toll of balancing dual roles can be substantial. Mompreneurs may experience feelings of being overwhelmed, guilt over prioritizing professional engagements, and a sense of identity loss from their pre-motherhood careers.

3.3. Support Systems and Resources

The success and sustainability of mompreneurial ventures are heavily reliant on robust support systems, both informal and formal. Family and spousal support are consistently identified as paramount for both business success and maintaining work-life balance. This encompasses financial assistance, administrative backing, emotional encouragement, and, crucially, active help with childcare and household responsibilities. The fair division of tasks within the household is deemed essential for enabling mothers to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors effectively.

There is a notable tension between the overwhelming reliance on informal family support and the insufficiency or misalignment of formal institutional support. Research indicates a negative association between mothers' entrepreneurial intention and firms' perceived family support policies, contrasting sharply with the positive impact of actual family support. This suggests that while individual families are stepping up to provide crucial assistance, formal organizational and governmental structures often fail to adequately integrate or support the unique needs of mompreneurs, thereby pushing them to rely heavily on personal networks and informal arrangements. The finding that mothers' entrepreneurial intention is negatively associated with firms' perceived family support policies, yet positively associated with perceived family support, points to a clear disconnect. This indicates that formal organizational policies might not be designed to truly accommodate the realities of mothers balancing work and family, or might even inadvertently discourage entrepreneurial pursuits by not offering viable flexible employment alternatives. This situation compels mompreneurs to create their own flexible environments, often within their homes, making personal family support indispensable. This highlights a systemic gap where formal support structures are lagging behind the evolving needs of the workforce, particularly for mothers.

Institutional and government support are critically needed from various stakeholders, including governments, financial institutions, and business development agencies. Countries like India have implemented numerous government loan schemes, such as Mudra, Annapurna, and Stree Shakti Yojana, specifically aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs. However, awareness and accessibility of these schemes often remain low.

Digital platforms have emerged as a vital resource for mompreneurs, particularly platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. These platforms enable direct marketing, facilitate community building, and provide invaluable opportunities for learning and networking. They are instrumental in creating various forms of value beyond mere economic gains, including engagement, cognitive, and self-preservation value. Furthermore, community and networking with other mompreneurs, online communities, and non-profit organizations offer valuable ideas, emotional support, and access to diverse resources. In specific geographical contexts, such as South Africa, the affordability and availability of domestic workers serve as a significant and unique support system, enabling mompreneurs to manage their work-life balance more effectively.

3.4. Impact and Value Creation

Mompreneurs contribute significantly to economies and societies in multiple ways. Their ventures lead to substantial economic contribution, including job creation and overall economic output. For instance, mompreneurs in the UK generated an estimated £7.2 billion for the economy and supported 204,000 jobs in 2015. Projections for India indicate that over 30 million women-owned businesses will create an estimated 170 million jobs by 2030.

Beyond direct financial gains, digital platforms, as highlighted earlier, enable multi-faceted value creation. Through platforms like Instagram, mompreneurs generate:

- **Engagement Value:** Fostering meaningful connections with potential and existing clients, as well as building a supportive community of fellow mompreneurs.
- **Cognitive Value:** Facilitating knowledge transfer and enabling the acquisition of essential entrepreneurial skills, which is particularly beneficial for time-constrained individuals with limited funds for formal training.
- **Self-Preservation Value:** Allowing mompreneurs to construct and reclaim their entrepreneurial identity, often distinct from their maternal role, and to support other women navigating similar paths.

The literature increasingly emphasizes that the "value" created by mompreneurs extends significantly beyond traditional economic metrics.

The emergence of concepts like "Self-Preservation Value" highlights the profound personal, social, and identity-related benefits. This broader understanding of value challenges the normative, often masculine, view of entrepreneurship that primarily focuses on financial profit, suggesting that policy and support initiatives should also account for these diverse, non-economic contributions to individual well-being and societal flourishing. The introduction of "Self-Preservation Value" as a new non-economic value generated by digital platforms, where mompreneurs build entrepreneurial identity and reclaim pre-motherhood identity, represents a critical conceptual advancement. This, combined with the assertion that mompreneurship is "not solely about wealth creation" and the emphasis on intrinsic needs, clearly indicates that the value proposition of mompreneurship is multi-dimensional. This redefinition of "value" has significant implications for how entrepreneurial success is measured, how support programs are designed, and how the overall societal contribution of mompreneurs is perceived. It challenges the conventional, often male-centric, view of entrepreneurship by validating the importance of personal and social fulfillment alongside financial gains.

Mompreneurship also yields significant social impact and empowerment. It empowers women, provides crucial role models for aspiring entrepreneurs, and contributes to reducing broader gender inequalities within the workforce and society. It offers a viable pathway for women to re-engage professionally and contribute to society after periods dedicated to childcare. Furthermore, mothers, particularly those caring for children with additional needs, often develop invaluable skills such as resilience, advocacy, and robust networking abilities, which prove highly beneficial in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

3.5. Methodological Approaches and Geographical Contexts

The study of mompreneurship employs a variety of methodological approaches, predominantly qualitative research methods. These include in-depth interviews, comprehensive case studies, and netnography, which are favored due to the nascent and nuanced nature of the phenomenon, allowing for a deeper understanding of lived experiences. Problematic reviews and bibliometric analyses

are also utilized to systematically map existing literature and identify critical research gaps.

A significant observation is the geographical bias and the emergence of diverse contexts in mompreneurship research. A substantial portion of existing studies originates from Western countries, including the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, highlighting a pronounced need for more diverse non-Anglo-Saxon perspectives to enrich the global understanding of this phenomenon. Studies focusing on India offer unique insights, revealing specific challenges such as deeply rooted societal perceptions regarding women's roles, persistent difficulties in accessing formal finance without a male partner, and the varying effectiveness of government support schemes. Indian mompreneurs often exhibit a distinct demographic profile, being comparatively young, well-educated, and possessing prior professional experience, which contrasts with the average Indian woman entrepreneur. Similarly, research from South Africa highlights specific local support systems, notably the crucial role of domestic workers in enabling work-life balance for mumpreneurs in that context.

While general themes of motivation and challenges are globally consistent, their manifestation and the effectiveness of support systems are highly context-dependent. The distinct findings from India, such as specific societal biases and the implementation of particular government schemes, and from South Africa, concerning the role of domestic workers, underscore that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to supporting mompreneurs is ineffective. This necessitates culturally sensitive research and localized policy interventions that acknowledge and address specific socio-economic and cultural factors. The consistent call for non-Anglo-Saxon perspectives and the detailed findings from studies focused on India and South Africa clearly demonstrate that while the concept of mompreneurship is global, its lived experience is profoundly shaped by local socio-economic and cultural factors. For example, the "perception of lacking seriousness" is a strong cultural barrier in India, and the reliance on domestic workers is a unique support system in South Africa. This implies that effective policy and support programs cannot simply be transplanted from one region to another but must be localized, culturally informed, and tailored to address specific regional challenges and opportunities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mompreneurship represents a dynamic and expanding field within entrepreneurship, primarily driven by mothers seeking a flexible work-life balance and personal fulfillment, often prioritizing these over purely financial gains. Despite these powerful motivations, mompreneurs consistently face significant challenges, including the elusive nature of work-life balance, persistent financial constraints, and the pervasive impact of societal stereotypes that undermine their entrepreneurial credibility. The literature highlights the critical role of both informal support systems, predominantly from family, and formal support from institutions and digital platforms. However, a notable disconnect exists, where formal structures often fail to adequately address the unique needs of this demographic, pushing them to rely heavily on personal networks.

The value created by mompreneurs extends far beyond economic contributions, encompassing significant social, cognitive, and self-preservation benefits. This broader understanding of value challenges traditional, often masculine, views of entrepreneurial success, suggesting that a holistic approach is necessary for assessing their impact.

Current Research Gaps and Areas for Future Exploration

Despite the growing body of literature, several research gaps remain. There is a clear need for more empirical research, particularly to explore the potential downsides and long-term implications of mompreneurship for these women, their ventures, and their families. Future studies should also delve into specific demographic groups, such as black female mumpreneurs in South Africa, refugees, or ethnic minorities, to understand how intersectionality influences entrepreneurial experiences and the effectiveness of support mechanisms. Further investigation into the interplay between value creation and value capture in this context would also be beneficial. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track the evolution of mompreneurs' experiences and perceptions over time, providing deeper insights into their long-term trajectories.

A particularly promising area for future inquiry is the comparative study of "Dadpreneurs" – stay-at-home fathers who become entrepreneurs. This comparative

lens is crucial for illuminating whether the challenges and motivations observed in mompreneurship are inherently linked to "motherhood" or to the broader role of "primary caregiver," irrespective of gender. Such comparative analysis could provide profound understandings into societal expectations and the gendered division of labor in entrepreneurial pathways. By conducting these comparative studies, researchers can isolate variables: are the observed challenges, such as societal stereotypes or funding bias, primarily due to gender, or are the demands, such as time management, work-life balance, and the need for flexibility, inherent to the primary caregiver role? This approach has the potential to reveal the underlying societal and structural factors that shape entrepreneurial pathways for individuals undertaking significant caregiving responsibilities, irrespective of their gender, leading to more inclusive and effective support policies.

Implications for Policy, Practice, and Aspiring Mompreneurs

The findings of this review carry significant implications for various stakeholders:

- For Policymakers: It is imperative to develop tailored institutional support programs that specifically address the financial, marketing, and skill development needs of mompreneurs. Policies should be designed to recognize their unique motivations and challenges, moving beyond generic women's entrepreneurship initiatives. Furthermore, efforts must be intensified to dismantle deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and biases in funding allocation and business registration processes.
- For Digital Platform Designers and Managers: There is a responsibility to acknowledge the multi-faceted value generated by algorithms for vulnerable users. Platform functionalities should be enhanced to actively support the creation of engagement, cognitive learning, and self-preservation value. Improved communication regarding algorithm potential and limitations is also crucial to empower mompreneurs in leveraging these tools effectively.
- For Aspiring Mompreneurs: Individuals contemplating this path should prioritize identifying their core passions and conducting thorough market research. Building strong support networks, particularly within their immediate family, is paramount. Developing

effective time management strategies and cultivating resilience are essential for navigating the complexities of balancing dual roles and managing potential initial financial struggles.

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