

## **A Story Of Strength And Struggle: Exploring The Motivations And Hurdles Of Mompreneurs In Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

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### **Abstract**

*The mompreneurs of Peshawar, a bustling city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, are the focus of this research. Bringing attention to these remarkable women in the hopes that we learn from their experiences helps us better grasp the balancing act of business and family life. Using Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, we investigate how Peshawar's mompreneurs' experiences are shaped by their gender, parenting, marital status, and socioeconomic level. We relied on in-depth qualitative phenomenological interviews to get to the bottom of these women's real-life experiences. The following seven themes emerged from the investigation: navigating financial independence, balancing roles and identities, intersectional challenges, societal expectations and support, identity and empowerment, resilience and determination, and flexible work schedules. Despite the many challenges faced by mompreneurs in Peshawar, our research emphasizes the intricate nature of this entrepreneurial endeavor. However, we need more comprehensive theories of identity and motivation to help us make sense of the myriad factors that contribute to and hinder their success. Examining mompreneurship in the specific social and cultural context of Peshawar, Pakistan, this study provides valuable insights. It also highlights the importance of thoroughly looking into Pakistan and South Asia. Ultimately, we hope our findings will help direct future research on mompreneurship and fill in the gaps in the existing literature.*

**Keywords:** Mompreneurship, Motivation, Challenges, Peshawar, Pakistan.

### **Introduction**

Women who start their businesses make a major contribution to developing their respective economies locally and internationally. In recent times, there has been a marked rise in the amount of attention paid to the business ventures undertaken by women (Al-Qahtani et al., 2022). Women entrepreneurs are becoming more visible as prospective economic participants in Pakistan. Women make up more than half of the country's total population and actively pursue economic opportunities that contribute to their development and the prosperity of their households (Qadri & Yan, 2023). Most published research has focused on documenting the gender prejudice, opportunities, and restraints that women entrepreneurs experience (Ahmetaj, Kruja & Hysa, 2023).

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The Collins English Dictionary (2010) provided the following definition for the recently coined portmanteau *momprenneurship* or *mumprenneurship* as in British English, “a woman who combines running a business enterprise with looking after her children.” The term “*Momprenneur*,” which refers to moms who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, is responsible for many of the contributions, and this term is part of a strong, rising trend.

In this study, the authors investigate the recent trend of women balancing motherhood and business ventures, focusing on the underlying motivation of these women to improve their immediate surroundings for themselves, their children, and the larger community. Being a *Momprenneur* is distinctive in that it entails striking a balance between one's professional and personal life, attaining a feeling of accomplishment and contentment with oneself, growing one's income, obtaining respect to equalize gender imbalance, and achieving independence (Frederick, 2020). This article aims to investigate the relationship between women and entrepreneurship, specifically the relationship between entrepreneurial mothers, or *Momprenneurs*. As a consequence of postfeminist discourses, the word “*Momprenneur*” has evolved to refer to a group of ambitious women who mix the obligations of motherhood with work. This group of women combines the responsibilities of motherhood and job (Lewis, Rumens & Simpson, 2021).

While entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who routinely build and grow new businesses of value based on possibilities that they see (Maritz, 2004), *momprenneurs* bring a whole new facet to the concept of running your own business. The new facet of this dynamic is parenting, which requires these female entrepreneurs to strike a healthy balance between their roles as mothers and company owners. Their drive comes from the selfless ambition to improve conditions for themselves, their family, and the larger society (Lewis, Rumens & Simpson, 2021).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report (GEM, 2019) estimates that women run around 231 million businesses; however, the number of *momprenneurs* included in this estimate is uncertain. eBay Germany published a report stating that “461,000 self-employed mothers earn a collective 42.4 billion Euros in Germany annually” (Ebay.de, 2016). According to the State of Women-Owned Business in the United States Report 2018, there are around 12.3 million women-owned companies in the United States, of which roughly 4 million are mom-owned firms (Oksuzi, 2020). A survey conducted in the United Kingdom indicated that “*mumprenneurs* created £7.2 billion for the United Kingdom economy and supported 204,000 employments in 2015” (Burn-Callander, 2015). The search results on Google provide insight into the pattern gradually developing around this problem. When the terms “*mumprenneur*” and “*momprenneur*” were searched on Google in 2010, the results returned 1,20,000 hits (Ekinsmyth, 2011). In 2016, the search resulted in 18,86,000.00 hits (Durrah, 2016). A search conducted by authors in 2023 produced 3,740,000 hits.

It is anticipated that women would engage mostly in occupations within the informal sector. The rise of *Momprenneurs* is one example of a phenomenon that may be categorized as part of the economy's informal sector. Rather than going back to traditional labor, *Momprenneurs* started new companies tailored to their family's surroundings and circumstances. In addition, moms who start their own businesses are active players in gender, home-based, and lifestyle entrepreneurship (Dhaliwal, 2022).

On the other hand, this sort of new venture company development comes with its own distinct set of difficulties, such as a greater likelihood of failure, a lower level of optimism and confidence in business, and, most crucially, the need to acquire start-up capital. Despite these obstacles, many mother entrepreneurs choose to journey into the unknown, only to find that they have difficulty managing their expanding company (Dhaliwal, 2022). The authors of this phenomenological inquiry make an effort to investigate the lived experiences of Pakistani *momprenneurs* in order to get insight into the ways by which these women overcame obstacles and problems. In general, and especially in Pakistan, little

attention has been paid to the emerging field of study, Mompreneurship. Consequently, this inquiry is motivated by a desire to learn more about the challenges Mompreneurs face in Peshawar, KP.

## **Literature Review**

As of late, numerous authors have stressed the importance of entrepreneurship to the growth and development of underdeveloped nations (Haram et al., 2021). Entrepreneurship is being more recognized as a key driver of economic development, international competitiveness, and the expansion of job prospects in countries throughout the globe (Alhothali, 2020). The notion of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic expansion and a facilitator of overall wealth is grounded in solid evidence (Ashraf, 2016). It has been shown to help individuals improve their living situations and escape poverty (Bhuiyan & Lvlevs, 2019).

Like many other countries, Pakistan has recognized the need to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit to reduce unemployment. Therefore, any nation serious about thriving should prioritize fostering entrepreneurialism (Acs et al., 2009; Alhothali, 2020). Changes in the social and economic climate have led to rapid progress in the area of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan during the last several years. Wealth creation, human capital accumulation, and the labor market dynamics are just a few of the many aspects of economic sociology that entangle themselves like the teeth of a saw with entrepreneurship. Women's entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant economic factor. Starting a business is an example of an entrepreneurial approach that may affect a company's long-term development and drive for profit. Since more and more women are actively participating in the economy of their communities, the barriers between male and female business owners are dissolving (Haram et al., 2021).

Patricia Cobe and Ellen H. Parlapiano are credited for conceiving the term "Mumpreneur" more than a decade ago. Mompreneuronline.com, the company's first and longest-running online venture, is a women-only online networking club that receives over 7 million unique visitors monthly. This website provides start-up entrepreneurial mothers who wish to work from home with access to an online community, blog posts, vibrant discussions on bulletin boards, a marketplace of one-of-a-kind products and services provided by Mumpreneurs, articles, books, and business advice from industry professionals. The technological advancements and internet connectivity available in today's world make it possible for any woman to promote her goods via a home-based business (Nel et al., 2010).

Researchers agree that self-concept, social capital, and the likelihood of future economic opportunities all play a role in influencing entrepreneurial behavior (Allen et al., 2007). However, men's and women's reasons for starting businesses are distinct (Cromie, 1987). The choice to go into business for oneself is influenced by both external forces and internal drives. Positive pull factors describe opportunity entrepreneurs who are compelled to act by the lure of a lucrative company prospect. Motives like the promise of future success are commonly cited by Pakistani women as their driving force. Push factors allude to necessity entrepreneurs motivated by issues such as unemployment, unhappiness with the workforce, and rigid labor markets (Nel et al., 2010). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations might spur a mother's decision to start her own business. The goal is to improve life for their loved ones and the community.

According to Brush (1992), the desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others is a driving force behind many successful female entrepreneurs. Women tend to bridge the gap between society's professional and personal realms. The desire to make a difference and give back drives many mompreneurs. In this way, women differ from males in that they emphasize satisfying their customers (Orhan and Scott, 2001). Women are often seen as more community-minded than males because they work together to improve their

neighborhoods and support one another in childrearing, economics, education, and training. Women who start their businesses are more likely to reach out to other mothers and encourage them to join their teams. In addition to helping each other earn money, this also provides work for other moms. Mompreneurs' business methods mitigate the negative effects of discrimination against women in the workplace in developing nations (Weiler & Bernasek, 2001; Moore, 2003).

Mompreneurs represent an exceptional group of women who, in addition to striving for success in their personal lives, are also committed to achieving success in their professional lives. This distinguishes Mompreneurs from other types of female entrepreneurs. They often have a perspective on professional accomplishment that is distinct from that of regular employment, and this allows them to have a healthy work-life balance by removing the numerous obstacles that prevent them from spending meaningful time with their families (Richomme-Huet et al., 2013). After having children, it may be challenging for mothers who run their businesses because of the many obligations and considerations involved (Lewis et al., 2015). Some women decide to get into this line of work because they believe that being a homemaker or simply remaining at home is not enough to satisfy their needs (Lewis et al., 2015). These women have the ability to produce ideas and chances for businesses linked to kids and parenting (Ekinsmyth, 2011), which will ultimately contribute to the revenue of the family. As a result, these moms are motivated by striking a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives rather than putting their full attention on their jobs or their children, which might compromise either aspect of their lives.

On the other hand, some of them are drawn to this line of work (Ekinsmyth, 2014) because it provides them with freedom and the dependability of being their boss. Thus, the above studies conclude that there are three primary characteristics, namely identity, which is defined as the conflict that arises between the roles of mother and professional, motivation, which is defined as the desire to "achieve work-life balance," and opportunity recognition "opportunities that are pretty often connected to the experience of having children" (Richomme-Huet et al., 2013). On the other hand, women have to contend with many obstacles brought on by society because society still adheres to the dated view that women should solely be responsible for domestic responsibilities (Braches & Elliot, 2017). In contrast, men do not face difficulties since business is still primarily seen as the domain of men as workers (Martin et al., 2015).

#### Setting the Context

As per the literature, women are driven to start their businesses, and as a result, they prioritize maintaining a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives (Brush, 1992). Women in Pakistan who do not have children may encounter a distinct set of obstacles on their path to becoming entrepreneurs, while women who have children may find themselves confronted with different difficulties and obstacles in the country. As a result, it is necessary to identify and respond to the need for researching mothers in Pakistan who are also caring for children to learn about the difficulties, experiences, and work dynamics associated with entrepreneurship. It is possible that being a mother and an entrepreneur (dual identities) would generate a distinct setting, implying or disclosing that Pakistani mompreneurs face different challenges.

Pakistan is a resource-constrained country with a large population and widespread poverty. Gender and social class have a major effect on how people feel and interact in society. Nearly 50 percent of the country's population is female. Processes for the development of women have been overlooked for a long time (Abrar-ul-haq et al., 2019). In developing nations like Pakistan, women are still far behind males in every facet of life. As a result of male dominance and cultural norms, Pakistani women continue to limit their educational opportunities. On the other hand, women can play an important role in the Pakistani entrepreneurial ecosystem (Salahuddin et al., 2022).

These multiple, intertwined entrepreneurial identities need to be explored to determine how mothers respond to this type of idea and how they participate in this kind of discourse. The phenomenon of mompreneurship in Peshawar, Pakistan is particularly understudied; this inquiry is required to understand the many contexts in which mompreneurs operate and the obstacles they face as mompreneurs in Pakistan.

#### Theoretical Lens: Intersectionality Theory

Kimberlé Crenshaw originated the concept of intersectionality, which offers a substantial lens through which to explore the ebbs and flows of mompreneurs' journeys in Peshawar. Crenshaw's works realize the interplay of multiple social identities, motherhood, spouse, gender, color, ethnicity, and others, and how they influence people's experiences and possibilities.

1. **Exploring Multiple Identities:** This concept identifies that mompreneurs cannot only be bracketed as 'just mothers' or 'businesswomen.' As individuals, mompreneurs acquire multiple intersecting identities. The investigation would reveal the various identities of mompreneurs, which influence their decisions, goals, and life circumstances. Cultural norms, gender roles, and location could also influence possible obstacles and opportunities for new businesses.
2. **Motivations with Nuanced Context:** This study takes an intersectional approach to understanding the complex motivations of mompreneurs in Peshawar. Are they motivated by autonomous concerns, social concerns, or economic factors? Given one's marital status, level of education, and socioeconomic standing, how do these motives vary?
3. **Challenges in a Multilayered Context:** Intersectional analysis may clarify the typical hardships mompreneurs experience because their identities overlap. For instance, a mompreneur from an underprivileged community would meet distinct barriers than one from a more favorable environment. The investigation would investigate the intersections that emerge when components include patriarchy, cultural expectations, resource availability, and family obligations.
4. **Narratives of Empowerment and Resilience:** The intersectionality idea highlights the resilience and support that may result from managing several identities. The investigation would explore how mompreneurs in Peshawar employ their intersecting identities to overpower challenges and etch out a niche for themselves in the corporate world.
5. **Policy Implications:** Comprehending the intersectional elements of mompreneurship might support design interventions and policies tailored to the conditions and circumstances of diverse mompreneurs. Peshawar's aspiring and established mompreneurs can profit from more inclusive and efficient support networks with this approach.

#### Central Research Question

RQ1. How do mompreneurs in Peshawar navigate and manage intersectional challenges (multiple social identities, including gender, motherhood, spouse, business-owner)?

RQ2. What are the reasons that push these mompreneurs toward entrepreneurship in Peshawar by using an intersectional perspective?

#### **Methodology**

The research was carried out using a qualitative phenomenological technique because the study aimed to analyze the experiences of mompreneurs in Peshawar. We decided to use phenomenology as our research approach to make sense of the meaning behind the experiences of mompreneurs in Peshawar and capture the structure of the complex phenomenon. This approach was selected because it would help comprehend the difficulties faced by mompreneurs in Peshawar, and via in-depth interviews, it would help realize the participants' lived experiences (Creswell et al., 2007).

Participants in this study were mompreneurs in Peshawar, KP. The study was conducted in Peshawar, the sixth-most populous city in Pakistan and a powerhouse of trade and business. Only those mompreneurs who had been successfully operating their businesses for more than five years were interviewed. Since we wanted to protect their anonymity, we referred to them using pseudonyms. The participants were very motivated to share their experiences, and they were questioned about their setting, their history, their company, their influences, and the difficulties they faced. The interviews were both taped and transcribed after they had been translated.

Concerning phenomenological research, several academics recommend using samples of varying sizes; however, in practice, it is adequate to use samples consisting of between 6 and 20 persons (Ellis, 2016). However, the sample size in many qualitative research projects is often restricted because of logistical challenges such as a lack of funds, insufficient time, or inability to recruit people.

Table 1: Study Respondents

S. No	Pseudonym	Age	Type of Business	No. of Children	Education	Age of Business (years)
1.	KF	63	Retail	8	High school	35
2.	SB	53	Realter	1	M.com	18
3.	BZ	45	Consultancy	1	M.com	10
4.	SKT	35	Retail	3	MBA	06
5.	TB	50	Edu-preneur	3	MPhil	11
6.	AUK	48	Retail	3	PhD	05
7.	CB	43	Freelance Photographer	4	MSc	13
8.	SI	45	Edu-preneur	2	M.Ed.	12
9.	MS	38	Retail	2	MBA	06
10.	IK	36	Edu-preneur	2	MBBS	08
11.	NS	38	Retail	02	MPhil	
12.	MD	35	Online Bakery	03	BA	14
13.	TA	29	Online Handicraft Store	01	BBA	05
14.	AI	27	Online Bakery	02	FA	07

### Data Analysis

The first author transcribed the gathered data and assumed responsibility for the analysis according to the six-step approach outlined in the IPA methodology (Smith et al., 2009). The authors had a meeting to discuss their preliminary observations. Subsequently, the first author conducted an in-depth data analysis by extensively reviewing the interview transcripts, carefully listening to the audio recordings, and documenting noteworthy analytical aspects. The notes mentioned above underwent a process of review and discussion among the authors, followed by the organization and interpretation of the data to ascertain emerging themes. The present study included a comprehensive analysis and subsequent discussion of the emerging themes. As a result of this rigorous examination, overarching themes were identified and further elaborated. The procedure was systematically replicated for every individual interview, carefully considering each specific case. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted to identify patterns of similarities and differences across all transcripts, leading to the development of final themes.

### Findings

#### Theme 1: Balancing Roles and Identities

Balancing Roles and Identities is the first main theme extracted from the data and has three subthemes: Subtheme 1: Juggling Priorities, Subtheme 2: Cultural Expectations, and

Subtheme 3: Identity Negotiation. As the first theme, it demonstrates how mompreneurs in Peshawar manage the delicate balancing act they must perform to fulfill their roles as moms, business owners, and humans. It highlights the many challenging aspects of being a mompreneur in Peshawar's cultural and socioeconomic environment, which presents several challenges.

In Peshawar, it is considered socially and culturally acceptable for women to remain at home and raise children. However, a new generation of businesswomen is making waves in the industry; they call themselves "mompreneurs," and they manage to be both mothers and businesses. Taking care of a family, running a business, and chasing aspirations simultaneously is no easy feat, and this theme beautifully captures that.

As one respondent stated,

“Finding a balance between my roles as a devoted mother and an enthusiastic business owner is an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless, I encounter instances where both occupations demand a substantial amount of time and effort, making this a difficult challenge.”

Respondent KF

The first theme has the following sub-themes:

Subtheme 1: Juggling Priorities

It is anticipated that mompreneurs globally will manage their home lives and businesses simultaneously. These women run their enterprises and shower their children with love and care despite their obstacles. Among the many strategies used by these mompreneurs to maintain order are effective time management, assigning specific tasks to others, and establishing firm limits.

One of the respondents stated,

“Putting in the necessary work into my business while still providing for my family is a constant battle. Trying to juggle my roles as a mother and an entrepreneur is an uphill battle.”

Respondent TA

Subtheme 2: Cultural Expectations

What mompreneurs in Peshawar go through is heavily influenced by culture. Many women struggle to pursue business goals due to societal expectations of women's caregiving obligations. This subtheme explores cultural norms' impact on people's decision-making, social interactions, and self-image.

As one of the respondents stated,

“Cultural influences impact the lifestyles of mompreneurs in Peshawar. Women may have internal conflicts when pursuing their job goals due to societal expectations of caregiving responsibilities. Subject to this subtheme is the impact of cultural norms on individuals' decision-making, social connections, and self-image.”

Respondent AI

Subtheme 3: Identity Negotiation

It is not easy to be a mom and an entrepreneur at the same time. Because of all the hats they wear, they may find it difficult to be authentic. Here, we zero in on women's sense of self-worth and health as they relate to how they see themselves.

As one respondent recalled an incident and said,

“As far as I can recall, one particular episode stands out. My phone began ringing while I was in a crucial business meeting with potential prospects. A project that would be good for our business was on our minds. The caller was the school where my child attends. As plans for the project were being made, the phone started ringing. The school claimed that

my child was unwell and required medical attention immediately. My child's health was too important for me to ignore, so I had to leave the meeting early; nonetheless, my decision might have cost us the sale. I sprinted out of the meeting to retrieve my child the second I apologized to the clients for any inconvenience this may have caused.”

Respondent MD

## Theme 2: Societal Expectations and Support for Mompreneurs

The second theme revolves around societal expectations and how much support these women receive from their communities, families, and society. By investigating the interplay between gender, motherhood, and entrepreneurship, this study hopes to illuminate the specific sociocultural setting of Peshawar as seen through the experiences of mompreneurs.

Respondents emphasized the importance of understanding social norms and support structures to create successful mompreneur policies, initiatives, and networks. This recurring idea clarifies why these women are motivated to start their businesses despite the challenges of juggling two jobs. Researchers also examine how cultural and societal norms influence success, work-life balance, and decision-making.

One of the respondents expressed the following:

“When family helps, it makes a big impact. My husband supports me, so I aim to be my own employer. Social conventions often influence our opinions. People assume work comes before family. Balancing is hard.”

Respondent TB

Another participant said,

“Gender stereotypes impact society. It is commonly believed that men make up the majority of entrepreneurs. Mompreneurs fiercely oppose this criterion. When things go rough, mompreneurs need someone they can lean on. We uphold one another.”

Respondent AUK

According to the respondents, a group of supportive individuals is essential for mompreneurs. Legislation, professional networks, and loved ones can all be a mompreneur's rock. Mompreneurship has the potential to flourish if society acknowledges and encourages it, given the changing perceptions of women. There should be daycare, flexible hours, and mentorship programs for mompreneurs.

As one respondent commented,

“It is remarkable how mompreneurs are accepted by society. These women are being acknowledged for their talents by political leaders, corporations, and communities. More and more initiatives are providing people with emotional and financial support. How mompreneurs measure success is influenced by the networking tools they use. Financial benefits and empowerment are now part of it.”

Respondent BZ

According to the participants, mompreneurs are influenced by societal standards and expectations. The traditional role of mothers as primary caregivers is being challenged by the increasing number of women who create their own businesses and take care of their families. Mothers who are also business owners may need help to meet societal work-life balance expectations. It is possible to feel overwhelmed, inadequate, and ashamed if you try to meet these expectations.

One respondent said,

" Juggling your responsibilities as a terrific mother and business owner is no easy feat. People often wonder if we really commit to each role. I vividly recall receiving criticism for bringing my baby to business meetings. As they questioned my commitment, I could



feel their watchful eyes. Measuring success becomes more challenging when there are strongly established norms.”

Respondent SI

### Theme 3: Identity and Empowerment

Societal and cultural factors constitute the third "Identity and Empowerment" theme. Unity exists between agency and self-awareness. This research focuses on how "mompreneurs," break out of patriarchal norms and start their own businesses. Mompreneurs are wives, mothers, and business proprietors. This emphasizes the need for gender and social norm assessments. These ladies may love themselves, have fun, and escape society via empowerment.

One respondent said,

“Mompreneurship has been a self-discovery adventure for me. My life's work was motherhood and marriage, they said. My business benefits from leadership and creativity. The newfound control over our life has helped my daughters and me.”

Respondent KF

Personality, social position, life events, and worldview all shape an individual's sense of self. Mompreneurs are women who start and run their businesses. These identities eventually intersect.

According to a participant,

“I have had to balance family expectations with my aspirations as a mompreneur. Despite everything, I am stronger now because of the challenges I have overcome. Other women in my community have found strength in my stories of overcoming obstacles and social norms.”

Respondent NS

The findings demonstrate that merging people's identities can lead to beneficial and detrimental outcomes. People are empowered when they have the self-assurance, information, and means to manage their own lives. By going against the grain, embracing their individuality, and creating a positive impact through their businesses, mompreneurs motivate others to have faith in the future.

As one respondent answered,

“Understanding that making a profit isn't my only goal in business is a liberating realization. As a mompreneur, I put my sensitive side and business sense to use. This intersection of my identities has empowered me and provided me with the tools to shape our group's reputation as a force for positive change by enhancing women's economic independence.”

Respondent SKT

In a similar vein, another responder said,

“Interdependencies among my mompreneur responsibilities are now crystal clear to me. Juggling children and career have given me a sense of empowerment and helped me overcome obstacles. Because of the way I empower myself in our family relationships, my children look up to me as a strong, successful woman who challenges traditional norms and encourages them to think outside the box.”

Respondent SB

### Theme 4: Intersectional Challenges

The fourth theme, "Intersectional Challenges," delves into the daily struggles that numerous oppressed groups face. The term "intersectionality," first used by legal scholar

Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights the complex interplay of many aspects that impact one's sense of self.

In the case of mompreneurs in Peshawar, Pakistan, intersectional restrictions illuminate the complex interplay between gender roles, cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and entrepreneurial aspirations. Starting and maintaining a business is challenging for these owners due to gender and family responsibilities.

One respondent commented on her intersectional identity as a mother, woman, and belonging to the lower middle class.

“Lower-middle-class mompreneurs face distinct hurdles. Financial restraints often limit my business possibilities, despite my wish to improve my children's future. I must balance my company, family, and time to find cost-effective sourcing opportunities. My family is supposed to come first, making balance difficult.”

Respondent BZ

Mompreneurs' entrepreneurial adventures inspire persistence and personal growth. On top of their business challenges, these women must balance family duties with gender expectations. Cultural bias hinders their business goals as mothers, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Caregiving obstacles, societal expectations, financial constraints, and competitive market dynamics affect the story.

Another respondent said,

“Peshawar's traditional beliefs make gender stereotypes hard to overcome. My family and friends question why I work so hard on my business. I manage parenthood and business while following social conventions. To demonstrate that women can support their families.”

Respondent AI

Another respondent, her Intersectional Identity Middle-class woman, single mother, stated, "As an only mom and business owner, I often feel inadequate. All they have in terms of emotional and financial support is me. This strain occasionally overshadows my business ambitions. Dealing with the preconceptions of single parenthood is challenging because people sometimes question my ability to handle both responsibilities.”

Respondent BZ

#### Theme 5: Resilience and Determination

Attaining one's objectives demonstrates strength of character and grit. These characteristics indicate mompreneurs who manage their enterprises and children's lives. With bravery and resolve, mompreneurs conquer challenges.

Resilience is the ability to recover from losses quickly, adapt to new situations, and keep going even when things get tough. The most successful mompreneurs can balance their work and family lives well. The goal of mompreneurs is to provide a better living for their families.

Focus and determination show mompreneurs' passion for their work. Their proactive approach, imaginative problem-solving, and dedication to learning demonstrate their determination. They blend motherly devotion with intelligence and entrepreneurship. This unique combination allows them to start businesses that promote their communities and principles.

According to one participant,

“Working as a mompreneur was difficult. My family and business sometimes require my whole focus. I was powerful because I protected mothers and children. To give back, I worked on business ideas after my kids went to bed. Balance is essential, and success

requires pleasant challenges.”

Respondent MD

These mompreneurs' tales are brought to light by the results, which inspire admiration for their resilience and capacity to create positive change.

Another participant echoed this sentiment, saying,

“Resilience requires adaptability, whereas determination requires perseverance. We became mompreneurs after discovering our city had no kids' education programs. We needed additional money, and many doubted us. However, we sought to offer students an excellent education. After overcoming obstacles and gaining strength, our influence rose.”

Respondent KF

Mompreneurs must be persistent and determined to succeed. They demonstrate the importance of persevering through hardship. One respondent stated,

“I've survived as a mompreneur. After working for a male-dominated corporation and encountering sexism, I founded a platform for female entrepreneurs. I tried hard to be taken seriously, but I wanted to. I lead a movement that shows the worth of perseverance.”

Respondent SI

#### Theme 6: Navigating Financial Independence

In the sixth theme, we looked at the motivations of mompreneurs. When asked why they started a business, most respondents said they were worried about making ends meet. By striking out on their own, many achieved financial independence. According to the research, living comfortably on one spouse's income is becoming more difficult in today's inflation-stricken and economically demanding society. Mompreneurs play a crucial role in supporting their families financially.

The most important factors that the current study's respondents considered driving them toward mompreneurship were the ability to provide for themselves financially and be independent. When it comes to being self-employed, the respondents' major factors include working for themselves and always looking for new opportunities. Independence from their financial circumstances served as a springboard to mompreneurship for the study's respondents. If they were self-employed, they would have more leeway to explore their creative potential and financial autonomy. Both of these benefits would come from increased personal freedom. Many respondents believed owning their firm would provide them the freedom they sought regarding their financial situation.

As one respondent said,

“Having no other source of income, I wanted to be a sole provider for my child, provide her with quality education and a comfortable lifestyle, and as an avid traveler, I was able to pay for my trips to Iran, the United States, and the rest of the world. I wanted to live my life to the fullest.”

Respondent SB

The desire of these Pakistani women to be financially self-sufficient drives them to start their businesses.

She further expounded,

“I desired for my family to be self-sufficient and independent in managing our home and lives. As a child, I was constantly encouraged positively by my father; it was because of his upbringing and confidence that I was able to overcome difficult conditions while running our family business.”

Respondent SB

### Theme 7: Flexible work schedule

The final theme that was extracted from the data discusses the emancipation from conventional 9-to-5 employment paradigms, underscored by a pronounced emphasis on autonomy over work schedules. Being a mother entails a lot of responsibilities and time commitments. Therefore, mompreneurs juggle several responsibilities, including running a company, raising a family, and maintaining a home. The theme extracted was that the respondents were drawn (pulled) into mompreneurship because of the flexible work schedules offered. A significant advantage enjoyed by entrepreneurs is the opportunity to shape the course of their journey. Because of its adaptability, this is an attractive choice for mothers contemplating a career change or who have just returned to the job. When women can set their work hours and make their own choices, it is much simpler to strike a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. Since their schedules are flexible, these mompreneurs can determine when they begin and end their workdays.

As one respondent commented,

“When my husband and I relocated to Dubai, I had a fledgling company and a newborn to take care of, and I had to leave my child in daycare on occasion, which was difficult. On the other hand, people in Dubai seemed to be quite supportive of women. Commuting was a breeze for me because I drove my own vehicle. I was able to pursue my interests and be a great homemaker because of my flexible work schedule.”

Respondent BZ

Most of the respondents cited the need to increase their degree of flexibility as the impetus for quitting their conventional job and pursuing entrepreneurship. Because of this motivation, the respondents said that they no longer feel the need to work in locations that are very far away from their families and children. Being a mompreneur and having children at home go hand in hand with one another.

## Discussion

In this discussion, we examine the implications of these themes, employing relevant research to substantiate or challenge the draw conclusions.

The first theme emphasizes the equilibrium that respondent mompreneurs must maintain in juggling their roles as mothers, company owners, and individuals. It provides a nuanced perspective on the challenges faced by these women. The findings align with previous studies that emphasize the obstacles encountered by women in conservative societies when they strive to overcome gender expectations and pursue their aspirations of becoming entrepreneurs (Rindova et al., 2022). The study of how women's multiple roles interact in various circumstances is reflected in the process of negotiating one's identity when faced with conflicting expectations (Lassalle & Shaw, 2021). The specific context of Peshawar (a conservative society) adds a unique aspect to these findings. Cultural norms exert a substantial influence on the internal challenges faced by mompreneurs, as well as on society's perception of them. This aligns with research indicating that the experiences of women in entrepreneurship are impacted by the cultural context (Hudson Breen, 2014). These findings present the various kinds of difficult decisions that mompreneurs must make. The findings corroborate the existing literature on the universal predicament faced by mompreneurs around the globe that is to strike a balance between their home responsibilities and work (Naguib, 2022).

However, the findings diverge from the research conducted by (Duberley and Carrigan, 2012) where they conducted interviews with mompreneurs to explore the role identities of the respondents. They investigated the conflicting societal discourse, the kinds of barriers and challenges faced, and impact on the identity of these women owing the conflicting roles of caregiver and business owner. The findings discovered that while being a good

mother was approvingly prized by these mothers, they did not silo their identities solely as "full-time" or "stay at home" mothers. In its place, they expressed their identity as mothers who established a business to follow a new career. Subsequently, their identity encapsulated both parenting and employment, rather than being solely defined by one. Moreover, the pressures surfacing from the amalgamation of their roles did not influence the identity of these mothers, as they successfully navigated their identity in response to these changes. Nevertheless, the integration of one's identity can be challenging, as highlighted by the research conducted by Duberley and Carrigan (2013) and Lewis (2016). These studies reveal that mothers often face conflicts in balancing their social responsibilities, as becoming a mother entails a significant transformation in their roles as both women and professionals. This shifting results in the occurrence of 'role conflict' since it involves changes in goals, motives, and behavior. Consequently, these moms become orientated towards this new identity. Duberley and Carrigan (2012) propose that women grappled with the conflicting demands of their dual identities, which were imposed on them by both them and others. They endeavored to conceal the tensions between intensive mothering and entrepreneurship by resorting to self-exploitation and restricting the scale of their businesses. These factors exerted a significant influence on them.

Peshawar mompreneurs' social networks and cultural norms are the subject of the second theme. According to research by Hatoum et al. (2023), women company entrepreneurs largely depend on their families. Family support is crucial and societal expectations are difficult. Theunissen (2022) found that mompreneurs with supportive peers are more successful. Daycare, mentoring, and flexible work hours are support pillars. According to earlier research (Ahmetaj et al., 2023), ecosystems can benefit female entrepreneurs. Programs help mompreneurs, and public opinion is shifting toward them. According to Boneberger and Kirilova (2015), these events are part of a larger worldwide effort to honor and empower women in sustainability and business.

The third theme delves into how mompreneurs' entrepreneurial journeys have molded their identities and agency. Through entrepreneurship, women may experience a shift in their sense of agency and self-perception (Kabeer, 2005). The study's participants said mompreneurs' leadership influences community and self-esteem. According to Dhamayanti et al. (2022), society and the economy benefit when women create their enterprises.

Many women are motivated to re-establish control over the quality of their employment, their rigid surroundings, and to satisfy their desire to play a role of a good mother when the combination of "Mothers and Entrepreneurship" is present (Foley, et al., 2017). In addition, Christopher (2012) emphasized on the well-known fact that it is well proven that motherhood is essential to the triumph of the 'female gender.' In his research, he focuses on how mothers explain the decisions they make regarding their career and parental obligations, as well as how they come to terms with these decisions and how they make sense of their choice in light of what they believe they should be doing. In addition, he investigates how contemporary mothers with small children have attempted to construct their identities as good mothers within the context of their working alternatives, rather than outside of them. This suggests that contemporary moms do not distinguish between their identities as good mothers and good workers.

The fourth theme explores the intersectionality of identities experienced by mompreneurs, which introduces an additional layer of complexity to the discussion. The challenges arising from gender, class, and familial position overlap and become prominent in the entrepreneurial journey, underscoring the need for targeted policies and actions to tackle these intersectional issues (Byrne, 2022). Since mothers traditionally have the function of motherhood, yet business adds another role, role identity has resulted in tensions originating from society. According to Duberley and Carrigan (2013), many mothers who have formed a new entrepreneurial identity went through a period of role conflict. During this time, they had to come to terms with the fact that building their identities as new mothers caused friction with their previous roles, which in most cases included working

full-time jobs. (Nel et al., 2010) investigated how mompreneurs created their identities, and how mompreneurs' identity extends beyond just being a mother. The findings showed that sustaining work-life balance places a greater significance into their lives and establishes fulfilment in yourself autonomy, and self-worth, and that they relish such stimuli more than motherhood alone.

The fifth theme highlights the mompreneurs' unwavering commitment and resolve. Consistent with research showing how resilience aids in overcoming hardship, these traits are essential for entrepreneurs to succeed. Female entrepreneurs confront many challenges, but their experiences show resilience (Newhouse, 2018). This detailed study sheds light on Peshawar mompreneurs' lives. It stresses social acknowledgment, specialized support networks, and regulation to help women overcome cultural difficulties.

The sixth theme shows how financial hardships propel women, especially in Pakistan, to business. Inflation and other economic stresses emphasize financial independence. Respondents want mompreneurship for financial independence and job autonomy. In keeping with the plot, it is becoming more difficult to survive in this economy on the income of a single spouse. Some studies have found that women are more likely to start their businesses if they have easier access to money. According to studies conducted by Patil and Deshpande (2019), a significant motivation for female entrepreneurs to start their firms was to achieve financial independence. For women business owners, financial considerations are paramount (Pauca et al., 2022).

Research has shown mixed results regarding the effects of financial independence on women company owners. According to Mattheis (2021), women company owners may prioritize self-determination and personal satisfaction over financial concerns. A web of interrelated factors likely drives mompreneurship. Mompreneurs seek a work arrangement that allows them more leeway to manage their schedules as they see fit. According to the research, mothers value work-life balance highly, and one way to achieve it is by giving mothers more control over their schedules. According to respondents, command over one's daily activities is the ideal environment for balancing personal and professional duties. Poggesi and De Vita state that women company owners profited substantially from greater leeway to set their schedules in 2019. This was especially true for women who had families. Because it will motivate working women to keep a healthy work-life balance, this incentive stands to gain a lot from them. A solid work-life balance was the most important factor influencing women's intentions to establish their enterprises in 2023, according to researchers Markowska and Naldi.

## Recommendations

1. Community networks should be built that offers mentoring, facilitation, lax work schedules and childcare assistance. The availability of such networks will help equip mompreneurs with resources as well as emotions aid, thus enriching the quality of the business environment.
2. Legislations and policies should be in place that help recognize and remove obstacles such as socio-economic status, family obligations and gender barriers. Such legislations and policies must be reviewed from the ground up to handle the interlocking nuisances and nurture inclusivity.
3. Initiatives and campaigns that help broadcast the message of financial autonomy among the masses especially mompreneurs should be in place. These initiatives can help mompreneurs make better decisions and face economic challenges.
4. Firms and entrepreneurial ventures are realizing the need to establish flex work arrangement and recognizing the relevance of autonomy in managing work schedules.

Supporting flexible work schedules can build more kind and accommodative settings for mompreneurs, making balancing individual and professional responsibilities easier.

5. Role models showcasing the triumphs of mompreneurs who have successfully steered the challenges of balancing motherhood and business should be roused this would help cultivate a supportive network and shifts societal perceptions.

6. Educational programs should be installed that should aim at facilitating the dual identity of "mompreneurs" and encourage the compatibility of motherhood and business. These efforts can challenge and discredit preconceived notions, contributing to a more inclusive understanding of the diverse roles women play in society.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The present study focused on a small sample of 14 individuals from Peshawar, KP. Notably, the findings from this group may not necessarily portray the experiences of mompreneurs across Pakistan. Although established on a small sample size, the experiences acquired from this study will act as a foundation for more comprehensive future research. Future studies should aim to comprise a wider array of motivational and identity frameworks that better accurately represent the various reasons and challenges fronted by mompreneurs in Pakistan.

This study seeks to expand mompreneurship research by evaluating it in Peshawar, Pakistan's social and cultural context. The findings expand our understanding of the phenomenon. This defines mompreneurs and sets the stage for future study on mompreneurship. Future scientific efforts may benefit Pakistan Understanding the similarities and meanings of mompreneurship in various instances might be helpful.

This study intentionally recruits Peshawar residents with varied professional backgrounds. This method is necessary to understand women's entrepreneurship in a less-studied setting. This study examines Peshawar women's entrepreneurial actions and motives to cover a large mompreneurship knowledge gap. This technique seeks to appropriately interpret Peshawar's many mompreneurs' experiences. These results can also affect policies and initiatives that support women entrepreneurs in comparable contexts.

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