

## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON SRI LANKAN MUMPRENEURS

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### ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is playing a vital role in any economy today. The secret of being successful is the entrepreneurship for many of the developed countries in the world. Singapore is the best example. Moving forward from traditional entrepreneurship leads to find many of new branches of it. Motherhood and entrepreneurship are such a new arena in academia today. Scholars are highly concerning working mothers in their studies. However, the attention paid to the motherhood and entrepreneurship is deficient. This concept is a novel concept to the researchers and offers a vast array of benefits to any economy through women self-employment and caring babies. Hence, this study is dedicated to exploring the Mumpreneurship in Sri Lankan context as an essential arena to study. The researchers executed an exploratory cross-sectional study by deploying the inductive approach to reveal mumpreneurs' challenges and motivational factors in Sri Lanka. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with mumpreneurs to collect required primary data based on the authors' semi-structured interview guide based on previous studies and hand-on experience of both the researchers. The findings of the study revealed specific motivational factors and some challenges encountered by Sri Lanka mumpreneurs. Further, these qualitative study findings are so worth for the current and potential mumpreneurs to understand the way forward as successful mumpreneurs while contributing to the social and economic spheres hugely. Also, policymakers and decision-makers of the economy can make viable decisions to boost this sub-sector of entrepreneurship since it gives lots of hidden benefits to the family, society and finally to the whole economy in many different ways.

Future researchers can further study this valuable area by focusing on new methodologies and directions.

**Keywords:** *challenges, entrepreneurship, motivational factors and mumpreneurship*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is the engine of growth in the developed countries of the world and developing nations are also focusing on following the same strategy to achieve success as same as developed nations like Singapore. According to the Department of Census and Statistics (2018), Sri Lanka is an emerging and developing economy in the Asian region showing the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth rates like 5%, 4.5%, 3.3%, and 3% in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively. Accordingly, it is evident that there is a decreasing trend in the GDP growth rate of Sri Lanka during the past few years and which is not a good sign as a developing country. Apart from this issue, poverty and unemployment are also making severe issues in the economy. Further, female unemployment is very high in Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics, 2018) though statics show the high female population and education rate.

This issue has created the way for females to move towards entrepreneurship. Since the 21<sup>st</sup> century, females' status in Sri Lanka had been changed due to industrialization & urbanization, spasmodic mobility, and social legislation. Gradually, most of the females are going for higher education, technical and professional education and their proportion in the workforce had also been increased. With such spread of education and awareness, ladies had to shift from the kitchen and other related household duties towards the non-traditional upper level of

duties; while some relate to more emotional, flexible, and independence in their work life. When considering new business creation (entrepreneurship), women play a significant role; while improving social and economic interest (Soloman et al., 2008). Moreover, the modern world women and entrepreneurship are important economic drivers worldwide (Mari, Poggesi & Vita, 2016). As a result of that, more recently, researchers have advocated the need for developing a deeper understanding of female entrepreneurship and the uniqueness of them. Moreover, there is an improved interest in starting a business among females until they raise kids and the women entrepreneurs without children may vary from their counterparts who have children (Khan & Rowlands, 2018).

The subgroup of women entrepreneurs with children distinguishes from all women entrepreneurs and that kind of women entrepreneurs can be called mumpreneurs (Khan & Rowlands, 2018). Mumpreneurs means a person who discovers and exploits new business opportunities within a geographical context combined with motherhood and ownership of the business (Ekinsmyth, 2011). Moreover, who can be defined as mums who move from traditional employment to operate and owning a new business to fit with a mother and an earner by the experience of pregnancy or having children (Lewis et al., 2015). Moreover, pregnant mothers and single mothers separated from their marriages due to various causes can be considered mumpreneurs, including womanhood, motherhood, and entrepreneurship (Esnard, 2016).

Even though there has a massive significance of mumpreneurs as a developing country in Sri Lanka. There was a lower level of enthusiasm regarding this concept, while the developed countries had been owning better focus.

### **Research Problem**

To understand the low entrepreneurial behaviour in Sri Lanka, the researchers collected evidence from Kalutara district, Sri Lanka, and observed a very low proportion of mumpreneurs among the existing higher number of entrepreneurs registered. Thus, the females can contribute to economic growth in Sri Lanka than males; they are bounded with household bonds, especially kids. Most mothers refuse to contribute to economic growth due to various causes while having such kind of capacity.

Moreover, Sri Lankan scholars have not paid their attention towards this new branch of entrepreneurship and lots of studies have been conducted based on different other entrepreneurial fields such as women entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention. However, researchers in developed countries such as New Zealand (Khan & Rowlands, 2018), Italy (Mari et al., 2016), UK (Duberley & Carrigan, 2012), USA (Ekinsmyth, 2014), Spain (Gabaldon, Anca & Galdon, 2015) and Australia (Archer, 2019); have conducted very famous studies about mumpreneurs. Though there is a considerable impact, the less volume of studies was done by Sri Lanka scholars regarding this concept and it indicates the contextual gap relevant to that specific area. Hence, there

are lots of significances of carrying out a study to understand mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the current study is conducted to resolve the research problem “*What are the challenges encountered and strategies used by mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka?*”

### **Research Questions and Objectives**

Based on the research problem, the researchers seek to find answers for the below research problems.

RQ 1: What are the motivational factors impact on the success of Sri Lankan mumpreneurs?

RQ 2: What are the challenges encountered by the Sri Lankan mumpreneurs?

As per the above research questions, below are the research objectives to be achieved at the end of the study. They are,

RO 1: to find out the motivational factors impact on the success of Sri Lankan mumpreneurs.

RO 2: to find out the challenges encountered by the Sri Lankan mumpreneurs.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Entrepreneurship**

Before considering mumpreneurship, it is essential to understand about entrepreneurship. According to Abu-Saifan (2012), entrepreneurship has

been identified as a vital factor in developing the economy and improving people's social wellbeing. Entrepreneurs are the people who take risks and give some value back to society. Moreover, they increase the productivity of the country (Chengalvala & Rentala, 2017). Further, entrepreneurs create values for people, do innovation, provide employment opportunities, and always seek a chance to move forward with the support of enough resource. The entrepreneurs were named as engines of economic growth and economic development through the innovation and job creation had been contributed by them.

Moreover, Women Entrepreneurship is one of the branches entrepreneurship and many scholars have studied in different aspects.

### **Mumpreneurship**

This concept can be introduced as another subgroup of women entrepreneurs having children and distinguishes them from female entrepreneurs who have not children (Khan & Rowlands, 2018). As a woman, when becoming a mumpreneur, they might desire to be like as more than just a housewife (Duberley & Carrigan, 2012) with allowing to raise household income also. As per the infancy phenomenon; these women should be considered mumpreneurs, and family-related incentives belong to that group of women with children (Khan & Rowlands, 2018). According to the investigation results about the self-employed women in Spain, children who had aged ten years or younger should spend more time than other females who seek to work more hours than salaried workers (Gabaldon et al., 2015).

Moreover, due to this concept's novelty, there was an essential requirement for theoretical development regarding that phenomenon (Khan & Rowlands, 2018). Identifying business opportunities regarding motherhood is much more essential to start up a new venture (Ekinsmyth, 2011) and this might be the most influential to the intention of self-employed mothers who are contemplating starting a firm or business. Through this concept, the economy has the strength to improve or enhance the GDP rate as a result of the enhancement of local revenue with the help of a larger population of women within Sri Lanka. Finally, it will lead women to gain more positive benefits and privileges with womanhood and motherhood while improving their achievements.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted by employing anti-positivism philosophy since the researchers wanted to find the subjective reality related to mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka. The qualitative methodology was adopted along with the inductive approach. Further, this exploratory study was done by executing the survey method to collect required primary data from the mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine mumpreneurs using a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers based on previous studies. The researchers met satisfactory level when reaching 09 semi-structured interviews conducted with mumpreneurs. The interview guide was translated into Sinhala form and gathered all data from the Sinhala medium. After that, the researchers referred to all Sinhala transcripts and translated them into the English format. Ultimately, codings were identified by referring to transcripts and identify the final open and axial

codings. Furthermore, the researchers wanted to study the individual level as the analysis unit and mumpreneurs were selected purposively. Finally, the content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data gathered to identify motivational factors impact on success and challenges encountered by mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

To achieve the study's objectives, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with selected 09 mumpreneurs purposively and analysed the gathered initially data with the content analysis method. The sample consisted with 09 mumpreneurs and they have different years of business experiences in the variety of business fields such as handloom items, homemade spices, carpet production, beauty culture, flower planting, local food production, printing and Ayurvedic treatments. Further, as the study's findings, the researchers identified, 06 major motivational factors for them to become mumpreneurs and 05 significant challenges encountered by them as mumpreneurs.

### **Motivational Factors**

Prior Experience, Growth Minded, Interest, Motherhood, Financial Growth and Supportive Parties are the identified significant motivational factors impact on the success of mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka. Having Prior Experience related to the business world is a plus for a mother to start her venture. Respondent 3 stated that her previous employment



experiences could be the most influential motivator for becoming a mumpreneur. Further, she shared her experiences as follows;

*...I previously worked as a manager in Sanasa Bank at Kuda Waskaduwa for 11 years. There I got full exposure related to business from the courses provided by the AG Office like Diviyata Saviya. I could get considerable exposure from training sessions and courses that were conducted by Sanasa Committee and other committees after my resignation.*

According to her views, previous employment exposure is also a well-suited motivation for mumpreneurs as a positive external impact.

Growth Minded is the next motivational factor and many of the respondents mentioned that they are working to grow their businesses in different aspects such as new brand, new properties, new business place and creating new job opportunities etc. Below statement of the fourth respondent proved the growth-minded as a motivational factor.

*...I have a serious goal to startup a separate shop near to my home to continue my beauty saloon which is already there in my home on a small scale.*

Interest is another motivational factor and there are mumpreneurs who have started their venture as a hobby and some are to enjoy their life with kids and household works. The first respondent of the sample stated her idea on this as below.

*...I think that is one of my habits while getting benefits and relaxing my mind. I often visit Nugasevana programs for*

*different products like handloom bags, pockets etc. And I always visit videos relevant to this field via my mobile as this area is my favourite path.*

Next, motherhood is a critical factor which caused to boost them to be mumpreneurs. It is evident with the statement of respondent no 03.

*...I decided to resign from my job due to my child started schooling. The main goal of my life is to develop the educational side of my daughter. Hence, I decided to start up a new business as self-employment while looking after my daughter.*

Financial Growth is also identified as the next motivational factor and many of respondents expect to strengthen their financial side of the families by having some additional income. Below statement of the respondent, no 09 is further proved that.

*...I had a goal to settle all our loans for banks and neighbours. I could give my fullest contribution to my husband through starting this business and could spend a happy life with all family members.*

As the final motivational factor, Supportive Parties were identified and when close parties support them, they are motivated to become mumpreneurs.

## **Challenges**

According to the study's findings, Financial Issues, Timing Issues, Market Issues, Personal Barriers and Manufacturing Issues are the significant challenges faced by mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka.

Mumpreneurs face financial difficulties when running their businesses and even Sri Lankan financial institutes refuse to provide loans for them. Below statement of ninth respondent proved that they have financial barriers.

*...Couldn't allocate at least one single rupee for the saving. We had to build our house and repay the loans and cover other consumptions through the only income from my husband and myself.*

Also, Timing Issue is another challenge faced by mumpreneurs and they do not have sufficient time to allocate for the development of their businesses as they have to balance their families and kids parallel to the business. The first respondent of the sample stated her idea as below in this regard.

*At the moment altogether I spend about 5 or 6 hours per day while doing my household duties and lower than the previous schedule due to my daughter's studies.*

Market Issues have created many challenges for mumpreneurs as they lack the proper knowledge to handle the market. Below statement of the fifth respondent proved this challenge further.

*...I'm the only person who maintains a salon in this area and my prices were also very cheaper than others. Hence, some competitors dislike to my prices.*

Personal Barriers are the next severe challenge and some of the mumpreneurs lack the required knowledge and understanding to run the business. Also, they have missed their close family partners since they engage with the business.

Also, the final challenge was identified as Manufacturing Issues and there they have different problems in quality and raw material in this regard. It is proved with the below statement of respondent nine.

*...prices of ingredients were increased recently. So, I had the problem to mark a selling price than previously. Therefore, I had to remain the current price to stay this market forward.*

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study was conducted to identify the motivational factors and challenges of mumpreneurs of Sri Lanka by gathering data through a semi-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and 09 semi-structured interviews were conducted with mumpreneurs. Results of the study found 06 motivational factors and 05 challenges of mumpreneurs which are specific to them. Table no. 1 summarizes the findings of the study.

**Table 1: Motivational Factors and Challenges of Mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka**

Motivational Factors	Challenges
Prior Experience	Financial Issues
Growth Minded	Timing Issues
Interest	Market Issues
Motherhood	Personal Barriers
Financial Growth	Manufacturing Issues
Supportive Parties	

Source: (Survey Data, 2020)

### **Implications of the Study**

There was no scholar of Sri Lanka has studied this concept before and this study provides a novel contribution to the existing body of knowledge. Moreover, as a novel area within the entrepreneurial environment, the researchers wish to introduce the significance of this new knowledge to the academic environment to conduct more advanced studies based on that. Apart from that, the students could gain better knowledge and practices for the economic and social barriers as a fruitful, innovative idea by offering an efficient solution.

These findings can also be utilized to make viable decisions to boost the mumpreneurs in Sri Lanka since they are a valuable proportion of the economy. Policymakers, entrepreneurship development institutes, educational institutes, decision-makers, and potential mumpreneurs can use this knowledge to make correct decisions. These challenges should be minimized and motivational factors should be enhanced to develop

more mumpreneurs to the country. Majority of women resigned from their jobs when they become mothers and dispose of a significant economic and social contribution to the country. Hence, there is a need to take every possible action to encourage existing and potential mumpreneurs. So, they can develop both their families and the country. Mumpreneurs have a different set of skills as they manage many more roles in their lives. Hence, they are the ideal people to be trained as entrepreneurs.

### **Future Research Directions**

Future researchers can carry out more research studies to explore different aspects of mumpreneurship using different methodologies rather than the current study. Future researchers are also recommended to increase the sample size and conduct longitudinal studies to gather more new arenas of this field. Moreover, quantitative studies can explore a different spectrum of mumpreneurship.

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