
Entrepreneurship and High Heels

Entrepreneurship by women is a major question. It helps to understand not only the place of women in business but also in society.

The changes in society during the last century have allowed significant participation of women in the work market. In parallel, women started creating new companies in every country.

Although women constitute a critical part of the group of self-employed workers, their work is often recognized as secondary and subordinate to men's work. It is possibly a result of the pressure of domestic logics that pushes the devaluation of women's productive activities.

Female entrepreneurship is now recognized worldwide as a leading global trend with significant economic, social and political consequences.

The increasing number of female entrepreneurs is contributing to a major dynamism in all economies worldwide. However, the level of female creation continues to be significantly lower than that of men.



We Can Do It! [MIL 43]

Objectives of this chapter:

- Understand the main characteristics of female entrepreneurs.
- Analyze the different types of female entrepreneurs.
- Raise awareness of the need to study female entrepreneurship in relation to the lifecycle of the woman and their family.

1.1. Entrepreneurship by women

1.1.1. Definition

Any woman who initiates, organizes and runs a business enterprise is a female entrepreneur.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is the world's leading study of entrepreneurship. Since 1999, it has provided information and comprehensive reports from international data collection to understand the entrepreneurial phenomenon.

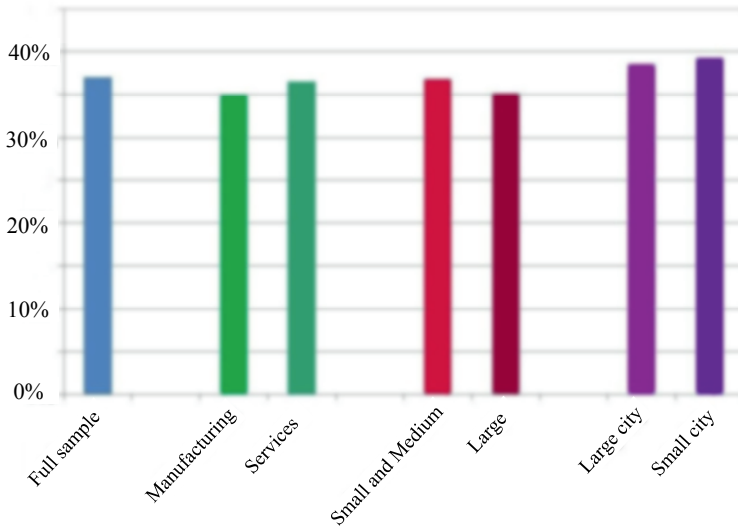
It provides information to better understand for each economy:

- the entrepreneurial behavior and attitudes of individuals;
- the national context and how that impacts entrepreneurship.

The last GEM Report (2015/2016) covers results based on 60 economies. According to the GEM [GEM 16]:

- More than 126 million female entrepreneurs are starting or running new businesses in 67 economies;
- An estimated 48 million female entrepreneurs and 64 million female established business owners currently employ one or more people in their businesses;

– In 5 years, 7 million female entrepreneurs and 5 million female established business owners are expected to grow their ventures by at least six employees.



Adapted from ICF – Banking on women 2013

Figure 1.1. Percentage of firms with a female owner

1.1.2. The GEM Special Report: Women's Entrepreneurship

The GEM Special Report Women's Entrepreneurship facilitates understanding of female entrepreneurship by researchers, policy-makers, educators and practitioners. It offers an in-depth view of women who start and run businesses around the world.

The report provides information on female entrepreneurship rates and gender gaps in the following key areas:

- participation in multiple phases of activity;
- characteristics and motivations of female entrepreneurs;
- societal attitudes about entrepreneurship;

– impact of indicators among entrepreneurs.

The ultimate aim is to foster an environment that encourages women to see entrepreneurship as a viable career option; equips them with the tools to create the type and quality of business each wishes to build; and creates awareness among stakeholders who will support their efforts.

The last GEM Special Report Women’s Entrepreneurship (2015) examines 83 economies and helps to understand the substantial differences in women’s TEA rates (total early-stage entrepreneurship activity).

Regions	Female TEA	Male TEA	Ratio female/male
Africa	25	26	0.96
Latin America and Caribbean	15	19	0.79
Asia and Oceania (efficiency-driven)	14	15	0.93
North America	11	16	0.69
Middle East (innovation-driven)	8	14	0.57
Europe (efficiency-driven)	6	13	0.46
Asia and Oceania (innovation-driven)	6	11	0.54
Europe (innovation-driven)	5	9	0.55
GEM average	11	16	0.69

GEM Special Report Women’s Entrepreneurship [GEM 15:17]

Table 1.1. *TEA rates (average) by region and gender*

The TEA rate is a central indicator of GEM. It measures the percentage of the adult population (18–64 years) in the process of starting a new business: nascent entrepreneurs and new business owners (fewer than 42 months).

1.1.3. Portraits of three famous female entrepreneurs



Rosalía Mera Goyenechea (1944–2013) was a Spanish businesswoman and entrepreneur. At the time of her death, she was the richest woman in Spain.

Rosalía Mera was born in [A Coruña](#), Galicia, Spain, in 1944. She dropped out of school at age eleven to work as a sales assistant in a clothing shop.

In 1975, she co-founded the [Zara](#) retail chain with her then-husband [Amancio Ortega Gaona](#). Ten years after the opening of the first Zara store, she founded a holding company Inditex. The company grew to become the world's largest fashion retailer of which Zara is the flagship.

According to the 2013 Forbes billionaire list, Rosalía Mera was the wealthiest self-made female entrepreneur on the planet, with a net worth of over US\$6 billion.

<http://www.forbes.com/profile/rosalia-mera/>



Zhang Ying is a Chinese entrepreneur and businesswoman. She is one of the richest individuals in greater China.

Zhang Yin was born Zhang Xiuhua in 1957 as the eldest of eight children. She later changed her name to the more contemporary Yin. In 1985, she created Nine Dragons Paper with just only \$4,000.

Today she is the founder and director of the family company [Nine Dragons Paper Holdings Limited](#), a recycling company that buys scrap paper from the [United States](#), imports it into China, and mainly turns it into [cardboard](#) for use in boxes to export Chinese goods. Nine Dragons Paper is China's biggest paper maker.

In 2010 Zhang's personal fortune was valued at approximately US\$4.6 billion, making her part of the top 10 of the wealthiest self-made female entrepreneurs in the world.

http://lexpansion.lexpress.fr/diaporama/diapo-photo/actualite-economique/les-femmes-d-affaires-les-plus-riches-du-monde_1491370.html



Françoise “Dalida” Foning (1949–2015) was a Cameroonian businesswoman and entrepreneur. She was also a politician.

Françoise Foning started as a simple employee in the tourism industry. In 1966, she opened a restaurant-bar named New-Style at Douala (Cameroon) to increase her revenues. The restaurant was so successful that its name would become that of a neighborhood in Douala. This was only the beginning of success. Foning then bought a car to use as a taxi and very quickly became the head of a cab company.

She diversified her business, buying a gravel extraction company and a furniture factory. Nothing could stop her. She then founded the Foning group, with import–export activities, and bought a clinic where she began to manufacture drugs. She was also involved in public works, in the construction of buildings and road infrastructures.

As a politician, she was involved in many organizations, particularly for women’s entrepreneurship. In 2005, she became the first black African woman to be elected World President of Women Heads of Global Enterprises.

<http://www.lesafriques.com/africain-de-la-semaine/francoise-foning-je-suis-nee-femme-d-affaires.html?Itemid=195>

1.2. Research on female entrepreneurship

Facing the growing number of women entrepreneurs, researchers started studying female entrepreneurship at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. However, the study of female entrepreneurship has been painted by

myths and stereotypes¹. Among them, the first one is to consider entrepreneurship as a masculine activity [STE 90, BRU 06, VER 13].

1. Women do not want to own high growth businesses	5. Women are not financially savvy and lack the resources to start high growth businesses
2. Women do not have the right to education	6. Women do not submit business plans
3. Women do not experience to lead high growth businesses	7. Women-owned ventures are in industries unattractive to venture capitalists
4. Women are not in a network and lack the social contacts to build credible ventures	8. Women do not access to equity capital

Table 1.2. *Common myths about female entrepreneurs*

1.2.1. Evolution of the research on female entrepreneurship

The focus of research on female entrepreneurship has evolved during the last 30 years.

Three different periods appear:

1) During the first period, researchers studied female entrepreneurship by estimating similarities and differences between genders. Indeed, according to articles written from the 1970s to the 1990s, the authors compared women and men creating businesses. Thus, the question studied was to know if feminine and masculine entrepreneurship was similar or different.

¹ Myth: a widely held but false belief or idea.

Stereotype: a fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

2) From the 1990s, a theoretical framework emerges based on feminist theories which denounce inequality between the sexes. The concept of gender is then mobilized to explore and explain the entrepreneurial behavior of women. Researchers start considering that entrepreneurial activity does not vary with the gender [BUT 97].

3) Since the year 2000, authors decide to return to studying the difference between male and female entrepreneurs [KIR 09, JEN 13]. The question is not whether gender is a source of difference, but how the difference has occurred.

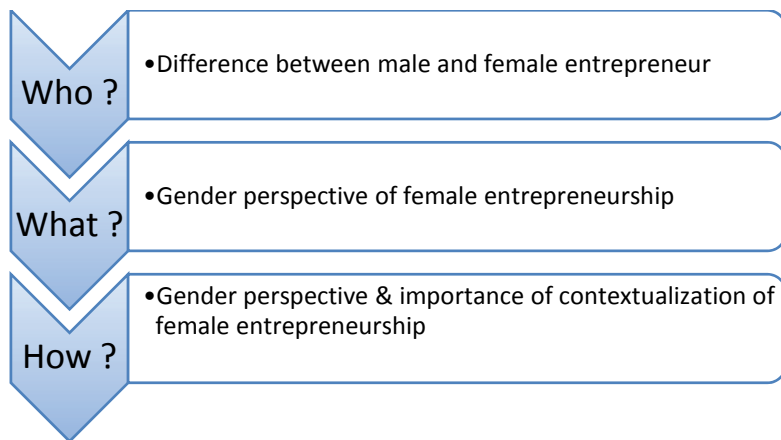
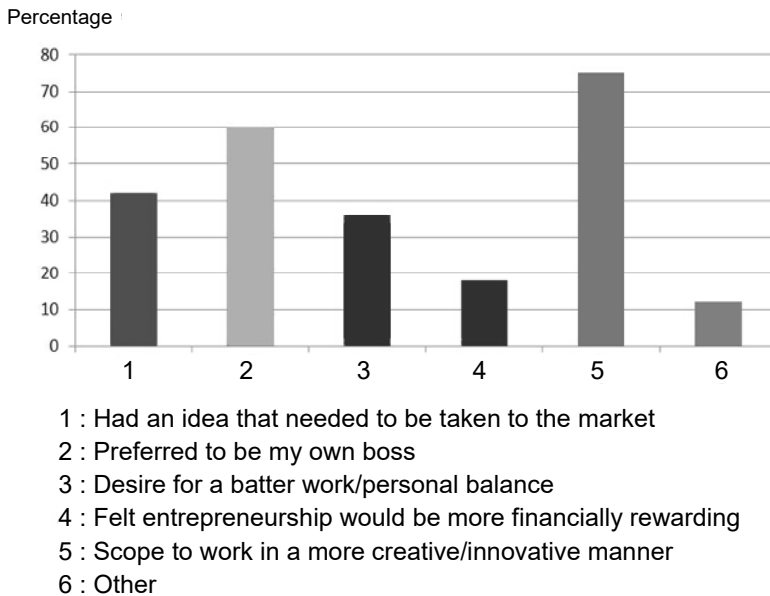


Figure 1.2. *Evolution of the focus of female entrepreneurship*

Today, many academic papers, books and specific conferences are contributing to the understanding of female entrepreneurship in four principal aspects: (1) a gendered phenomenon, (2) embedded in a family, (3) driven by opportunity or necessity and (4) looking for objectives that are not only economic [JEN 13].

1.2.2. Entrepreneurial motivations of women

The motivations for business creation for women as well as men are very diverse. The decision to go into business is the result of interactions between personal reasons, specific circumstances and context which is more or less favorable.



Adapted from: www.womenweb.in

Figure 1.3. Reasons for entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship literature traditionally considers the creation of businesses as chosen or imposed. Originally developed by Shapero [SHA 75] and Vesper [VES 80], the “Push and Pull” approach explains the reasons why an individual creates his/her own company. It distinguishes two principal classes of motivations: the “push motivations” and the “pull motivations”.

– Push motivation => necessity entrepreneurship. The individual, finding no alternative employment or feeling unsatisfied with his current work, is pushed to a business creation to deal with these situations perceived as negative.

– Pull motivation => opportunity entrepreneurship. The individual decides to create an enterprise because of a pull from an attractive business opportunity or from a desire to be independent, both factors considered as positives.

Push factors	Pull factors
Be unemployed Need to earn money Lack of recognition Experience the glass ceiling - ...	Desire for independence Desire to be one's own boss Follow a business opportunity Build a project -...

Table 1.3. *Principal factors of motivation*

Overall, the decision to go and start a business is more complex for women.

Their motivation is composed of traditional factors as well as others such as the need for balance between the professional and family life. Female entrepreneurs then need to arbitrate, whenever they can, the different spheres of their activities. Some of them will separate their activities, while others will completely integrate them.

It is, therefore, appropriate to consider a multiplicity of female entrepreneur profiles, in connection with their factors of motivation and the women's lifecycle (productive or reproductive). Indeed, different motivational factors will be in line with the various periods of life of the woman. For example, when family responsibilities are at their peak, looking for some flexibility between work and family life becomes an important factor for women. However, it seems

reasonable to assume that when children grow older, other factors will be more important for female entrepreneurs.

1.3. Female entrepreneurship: a variety of profiles

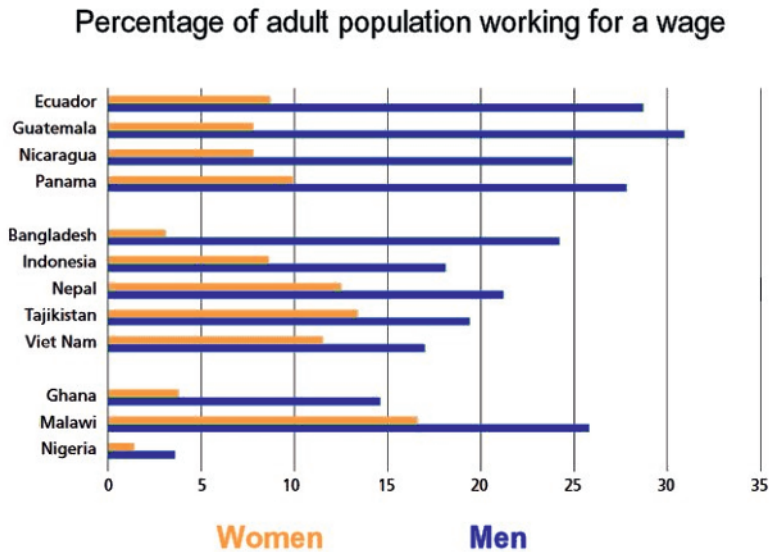
Female entrepreneurs are diverse and the companies they create are also different. These variances are a result of their personal stories, aspirations and environments in which they develop their business.

1.3.1. *When necessity means female entrepreneurship*

Necessity entrepreneurs, women or men, create firms primarily for economic reasons. Their main motivations are based on push factors such as wanting to ensure their livelihood, to solve a problem of unemployment or to overcome discrimination or marginalization. This entrepreneurship by necessity allows them to ensure the satisfaction of their basic needs.

Moreover, in most countries, and regardless of its economic, social and cultural aspects, women have more barriers to employment than men. They are the last to be hired and the first to be fired [ELA 10]. Often relegated to household activities, women are forced to build their business because of a lack of employment or an unsatisfactory job for which the remuneration is often not sufficient to ensure the survival of the individual or her primary family group.

Female entrepreneurship seems to be more frequent in low-income countries, among illiterate and poor communities with high birth rates. Generally, beyond the lack of (or less) formal education, women have found a way to enter the local economy through entrepreneurship [ASC 12, LAN 07].



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization (2011)

Figure 1.4. *Participation of women in rural wage employment*

Research shows that women in poor and developing countries dedicate themselves to small-scale food production, as a way to fulfill family needs. This is the case in Uganda, where 80% of all cultivated food is produced by women [DAV 12]. Moreover, the growing number of female entrepreneurs is an indicator of the social and economic transformation of some countries [ASC 12]. Regarding this situation, we could interpret that women are acquiring more autonomy and self-confidence to build successful companies.

The International Day of Rural Women recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.” The International Labour Organization is working to promote skills in the agricultural sector and small and medium enterprises.

For example, in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, over 2,900 women entrepreneurs were trained to start their own business [ILO 14]. Results were significant:

- training boosted their confidence;
- one new company has been created for every two entrepreneurs trained;
- two jobs were added to each new business which was started after training, including the job of the firm owner.

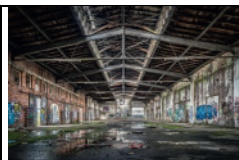
In developing countries, female entrepreneurship could be favored by access to microcredit institutions and also through family dynamics, allowing the collaboration of household members on the entrepreneurial project. Access to micro-finance empowers women, improves their level of aspirations and diminishes marginalization. However, results of studies developed in Africa show that access to microfinance does not improve the quality of life of those female entrepreneurs. Indeed, they continue to live at a precarious (subsistence) level without growth of the created companies [WEL 13].

However, the idea that women in developing countries are creating necessity business while women in developed countries are creating opportunity business has to be reconsidered to evaluate the social and economic changes in every country.

For instance, several studies developed in Great Britain show a presence of female entrepreneurship by necessity since the 1990s.

Coughlin and Thomas [COU 02] explain it as a consequence of divorce, monoparental families and also the restructuration of companies with the elimination of jobs destined to women.

Consequently, the responsibility for the subsistence of the family pushes women to entrepreneurship, whatever their geographical origins.



CC0 Public Domain -
Pikabay.com

1.3.2. Entrepreneurship as a transition career for high-qualified women

Among the variety of profiles of women entrepreneurs, one group is distinguished by their motivation for challenge, creativity and independence. It is a group of women searching for self-fulfillment. Women look for accomplishment in the economic area and also in the personal or familiar sphere. They are motivated principally by pull factors.

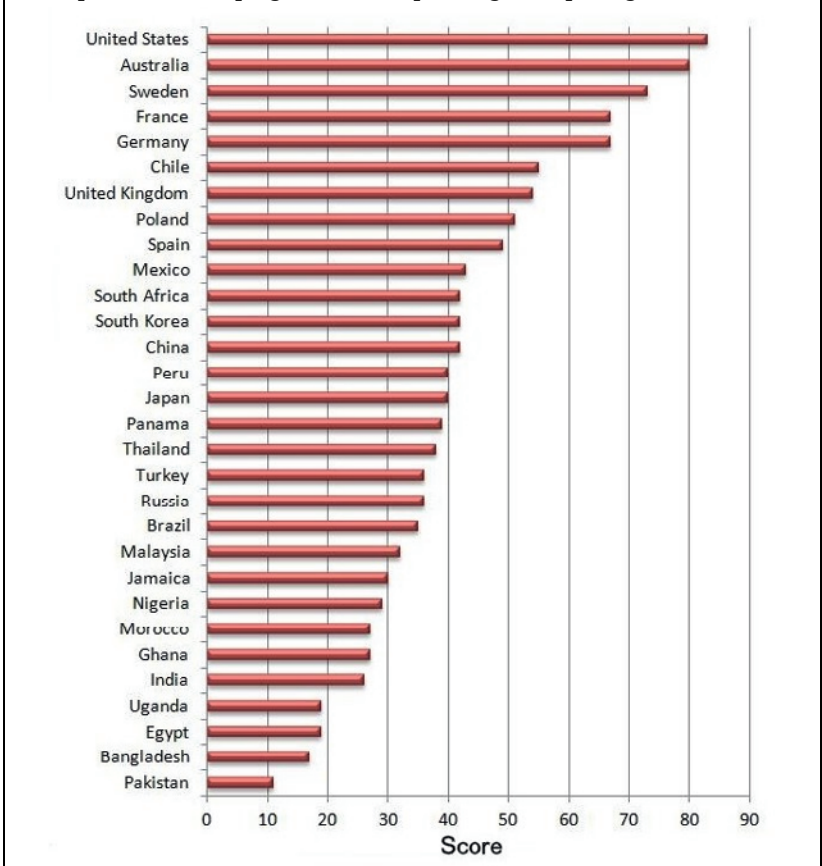
In the article of Hughes [HUG 06], more than the half of the Canadian women interviewed correspond to this category. The author calls them “classic entrepreneurs.” It is the case of women who decide to create by choice and not by need. Some of them will take a decision to pursue on an entrepreneurial career soon after the end of their studies. Others will consider entrepreneurship as a continuation of their professional career after a wage employment. Research on career logics outlines the central role of the individual in the construction of the professional path [BOW 86].

Literature on entrepreneurship shows that, in developed countries, women deciding on an entrepreneurial career as a first choice are generally more educated than men [LAN 07]. A substantial number of those women have university studies [HUG 06], and develop high grow companies that require external funding [GAT 09].

Regarding women creating business after previous work experience, their choice is conceived as a continuation of their career path and not a rupture. Buttner and Moore [BUT 97] studied 129 women who decided to leave their jobs to create their own companies. Two principal motivations emerge from the study: challenge and independence. They are also in search of an equilibrium between their professional and family life. However, other studies show that female executives are not different from men regarding the search for a balance between personal and working life [KON 91, MOR 95].

 CC0 Public Domain - Pikabay.com	47.7% of women in the United States believe that they are capable of starting a business 9.1 million women-owned businesses Employment : 7.8 million Revenue : 1.4 million \$
---	--

Commissioned by Dell, the GEDI is the world's only diagnostic tool that measures potential female entrepreneurship by analyzing entrepreneurial ecosystems, business environments and individual aspirations across 30 developed and developing economies spanning multiple regions.



From: Dell Women Gender Index (2014)

Figure 1.5. The Gender-Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index

1	Chicago	30%	7	Tel Aviv	20%
2	Boston	29%	8	Toronto	20%
3	Silicon Valley	24%	9	Singapore	19%
4	Los Angeles	22%	10	Kuala Lumpur	19%
5	Montreal	21%	11	London	18%
6	Paris	21%	12	Moscow	17%

Adapted from Global Start up EcoSystem (2015)

Table 1.4. *The world's top cities for female startup founders*

While entrepreneurship is a voluntary choice for many highly qualified women, others will embark on entrepreneurial activities to overcome frustration caused by discrimination.

Discrimination could mean a lack of progression in the hierarchical ladder or responsibilities (glass ceiling). It can also be more subtle, such as in the case of wage differentials for men and women regarding the same job description.

Among the different forms of discrimination, the glass ceiling is an engine for entrepreneurial creation in the case of highly-qualified women [COR 04, KIR 09]. This situation is true in any country, independent from the level of development of the country [DAV 12].

Consequently, female entrepreneurship as a career transition is a good solution to overcome discrimination in a work environment. Moreover, highly qualified women can expect to earn better revenues in entrepreneurship than in the job market [ELA 10].

1.3.3. Mompreneurs or the art of conciliating all the roles of women in society

The impact of maternity on entrepreneurial motivation was hidden behind the search for balance between professional and personal life.

McGowan *et al.* [MAG 12] show that even if big companies care about the problems of balance, proposing flexible schedules or home working, family life has a negative impact on the careers of women. Indeed, women leave their posts to become full-time mothers, and some of them will never return and will create their business instead [WIN 04].

For women, entrepreneurship could be a way to take care of their professional career and their children at the same time [CRO 87]. Indeed, as entrepreneurship allows flexibility concerning place and hours of work, it permits women to adapt better to their children's needs. Unsatisfied with their corporate career, women perceive entrepreneurship as a tool to adjust career and family duties [SIM 06].

In the classification of female entrepreneurs by Hughes [HUG 06], the group of work–family entrepreneurs is composed of women principally motivated by a job–life balance, flexible schedules and home working. They are younger than the classic entrepreneurs, married or living in a couple (85% of the cases of her study).



CC0 Public Domain - Pikabay.com

Consequently, the impact that maternity has on the factors of motivation has to be examined with more attention by the researchers.

In 2009, Brush *et al.* propose a conceptualization of female entrepreneurship called the 5M model.

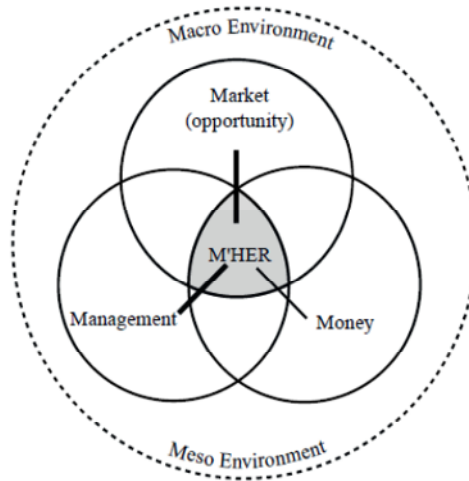


Figure 1.6. *The 5M model of female entrepreneurship [BRU 09: 9]*

This model is based on three principal dimensions of the entrepreneurial creation:

- market: the access to business opportunities;
- money: the access to financial capital;
- management: organization and human capital.

The model also considers two levels of analysis:

- meso/macro environment: society expectations, culture and regional institutions;

– motherhood (« M’Her »): a metaphor of the family context and the place of the female entrepreneur and her role of utility maximizer along with her partner.

In this new equilibrium between external factors (macro and meso environment) and internal factors (microenvironment), maternity will allow the development of entrepreneurial motivation in a perspective of family embeddedness [ALD 03], in which family will have an influence in the business and *vice versa*.

Beyond the context of a family–work balance, a new growing literature emerges to define and analyze a new profile of female entrepreneurs: mompreneurs or mumpreneurs [DAN 14]. It first appeared in the 1990s in Canada and the United States and grew to 6–7 million in America in the last years.

Mompreneur, mumpreneur or mampreneur (in French)	
Behind the neologism meaning mother and entrepreneur, it is a new reality in which the company and the child are both conceived at almost the same time. A mompreneur identifies herself as a mother and business women. She decides to create and manage an organization to succeed a work–life balance that is almost impossible in the job market. The business opportunity is in general in relation to maternity and child-rearing [RIC 13].	
Originally, the first story in the media was that of a Canadian mompreneur, Sandra Wilson, founder of the company Robeez Footwear	
It was 1994. Sandra Wilson, a young wife and mother, was downsized out of her airline job. Wishing to spend more time with her 18-month-old son Robert, Sandra saw this as an opportunity	After the overwhelming response of her first exhibition, in 1994 at the Vancouver Gift Show trade exhibition, Sandra decided to start a business: Robeez Footwear. Sandra hired her first

to start her own home-based business. For inspiration, she looked to her son's tiny feet. Sandra set out to handcraft a pair of brightly colored, soft-soled leather shoes for young Robert. Sandra decided to name the shoes after her son. "Robeez" shoes were born.	sales representative in March 1995, and by May 1997 Robeez was online. It was the beginning of an incredible growth story. The first recommendations and pediatricians' advice did the rest. For 10 years, Sandra Wilson grew her business by creating new product lines and entering new markets.
In September 2006, Robeez was acquired by the Stride Rite Corporation. Today, Robeez is recognized as the world's leading manufacturer of soft-soled leather footwear for newborns to 4-year-olds. Robeez Footwear now has close to 400 employees and sells shoes in over 4,500 stores in countries throughout North America, Europe, Australia and parts of Asia.	

http://www.robbee.eu/histoire_robbee_en.html

According to Korsgaard [KOR 07], the primary motivation for the mompreneur is to reconcile professional life and family life to find a balance between her workplace or career and the needs of her family. Similarly, Jean and Forbes [JEA 12] show that push factors are behind the entrepreneurial motivation of Canadian mompreneurs. They studied 20 cases, and found that mompreneurs create businesses to combine their personal project with their family life. However, the research developed by Nel *et al.* [NEL 10], based on three in-depth case studies of Australian mompreneurs, indicates that both push and pull factors motivated them. The authors identify several factors of motivation such as the balance between work and family life, the desire for achievement, personal satisfaction, increased income, the opportunity to earn respect and the search to become independent.

The study of Ekinsmyth [EKI 11]) emphasizes the importance of taking into account the impact of geographical and economic criteria on entrepreneurial practices of

mompreneurs. The study, developed in the south of England, includes the difficult economic context and the sharp rise in unemployment in Birmingham since the 1990s. The author considers mompreneurs as a subgroup of women at the interface between the world of paid work and motherhood. Also, Duberley and Carrigan [DUB 12] show that mompreneurs engage in entrepreneurship at the time of birth of a child. They search to become independent and to escape from being perceived as housewives. These results confirm the integration of the macro and micro levels of analysis by the model of Brush *et al.* [BRU 09].

Mompreneurs in the UK

Over 1.5 million mompreneurs are now established in the UK, and their numbers are rising fast. The number of self-employed women grew by over 167,000 in the last 2 years according to the Office for National Statistics (March 2016). What is behind the boom in mum's start-ups?

According to Laura Rigney, founder of MumpreneurUK, "most mumpreneurs start their business when they are on maternity leave, many discover a gap in the market related to children or babies. They decide they want the flexibility of being their own boss and don't want to leave their kids and go back to work. And with the cost of childcare now so high, it often just doesn't pay for mums to go back to their job and find one or more nursery places". But mumpreneurs still face barriers to starting up. "The biggest is people not taking them seriously as business women, particularly family and friends. Everybody sees their business as just a hobby". Access to finance is less of a problem, as "a lot of these women tend to start a business which doesn't need a lot of funding, most do it with as little as £500. Mums use savings that they've built up or borrow from their family. There are also quite a few angel investors who are keen to invest in mum-owned businesses, as mums are seen as a lower risk".

George Derbyshire, ex-chief executive of the National Enterprise Network, says that "high-profile female entrepreneurs have helped give other women the confidence that they can do it too". "Traditional barriers to women starting businesses don't seem to be here anymore; most people are bending over backwards to support women entrepreneurs". Moreover, "a lot of women have realized that running a business from home is

manageable. Add to that the developments in internet technology are making it easier for people to work from home and it explains the upsurge”.

Sam Willoughby, founder of online business What's On 4 Little Ones?

“I didn’t return to work after having my baby as my employer didn’t offer me any flexibility with my role. I was at a very low point where I felt that my years of career building had been for nothing, and my experience was of no value. But what this actually gave me was an opportunity to make my own flexible career.”

“I had the idea for my business when I was trying to find local activities to go to with my baby. It was near-impossible to find accurate and comprehensive information. I linked this problem with my own experience working as a project manager for a well-known directory company, and What’s On 4 Little Ones was born.”

Anna-Louise Simpson, founder of herbal tea business Mama Tea

After 3 years of trading, and with a string of UK supermarket stocking her Mama Tea product, former corporate lawyer Anna-Louise’s caffeine-free herbal infusions have attracted wholesalers from around the world.

“Being a stay-at-home mum was the most difficult job I’ve ever done. Just doing the same thing every day, and playing with things like craft kits, means you do not have much time for yourself. But with the business I have grown, it feels fantastic to be doing something for myself and spend time with the kids. That is probably what drives many of us mumpreneurs”.

<http://www.startupdonut.co.uk/startup/start-up-business-ideas/running-a-business/what-s-fuelling-the-ever-growing-army-of-women-who-balance-babies-with-workin>

1.4. Summary

Nowadays, women are responsible for a significant amount of the economic activity in every country. The creation of companies by women has been extensively studied in relation to men’s entrepreneurship. With the rise of the presence of

women in the work market, not only as employees but also as entrepreneurs, the panorama of female entrepreneurship has become complex, and different motivational profiles coexist.

In this chapter, we presented three main types that appear regularly in research in women's entrepreneurship: female entrepreneurs by necessity, women in an entrepreneurial career (or career transition) and female entrepreneurs at the time of maternity (mompreneurs).

In particular, the creation of business by women, their motivation and the type of company created will be related to the lifecycle of the women and their family.

