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# "Motherhood Means Business: a motivational factor behind entrepreneurship?"

*A qualitative study of what can motivate a mother to become an entrepreneur*

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# Sammanfattning

**Examensarbetets titel:** Moderskap betyder företag: en motivationsfaktor i entreprenörskap

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**Nyckelord:** Mödra entreprenörskap; Motivationsfaktorer; Push och Pull teorier; Möjlighets upptäckt

**Forskningsfråga:** *Kan moderskap generera motivationsfaktorer som positivt påverkar en mammas val att bli en entreprenör? Om så, vad kategoriserar dem och hur kan de fungera?*

**Syfte:** Syftet med denna uppsats är att utforska hur mammor påverkas positivt av deras barn, och hur detta kan resultera i entreprenöriella aktiviteter.

**Metod:** Denna uppsats är en kvalitativ forskningsstudie baserad på semistrukturerade intervjuer med 10 mödra-entreprenörer med syfte att svara på forskningsfrågan.

**Teoretiska perspektiv:** Det teoretiska ramverket som skapats, är baserat på två av de olika använda teorier som beskriver entreprenöriella aktiviteter och motivationsfaktorer.

**Resultat:** Fyra motivationsfaktorer relaterade till moderskap har identifierats och kopplats till en mammas beslut att starta företag.

**Slutsats:** Moderskap genererar motivationsfaktorer som positivt påverkar en mammas beslut att bli en entreprenör, och kan fungera som både push-och pullfaktorer.

# Abstract

**Title:** Motherhood Means Business: a motivational factor in entrepreneurship

**Seminar date:** 1 June 2023

**Course:** FEKH99, Bachelor Degree Project in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, Business administration, 15 University Credit Points

**Authors:** Molly Eklund, Isa Stinger & Stina Svensson

**Advisor:** Ziad El-Awad

**Keywords:** Mother entrepreneurship; motivational factors; Push and Pull theory; Opportunity recognition.

**Research question:** *Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur? If so, what can characterize them and how can they function?*

**Purpose:** The purpose of this essay is to examine how mothers get positively affected by their children and how this can result in entrepreneurial activities.

**Methodology:** This thesis is a qualitative research based on semi structured interviews with 10 mother entrepreneurs with a purpose of answering the research question.

**Theoretical perspective:** The theoretical framework created in this thesis is based on two different theories used to describe entrepreneurship activities and motivational factors.

**Result:** Four motivational factors related to motherhood were identified and could be linked to the mother's decision to create a business.

**Conclusions:** Motherhood is a generating motivational factor that positively affects a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur, and can function as both push and pull factors.

# Preface

*This thesis was made possible thanks to the invaluable contributions of the amazing mother entrepreneurs who generously donated their time to participate in our interviews. We are truly amazed by their commitment to our research endeavor and appreciate their enthusiastic engagement immensely. The interviews did not only generate valuable insights in our research but also inspired us and will help us in our future entrepreneurial endeavors. We extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to every single entrepreneur that contributed to our research and that we had the opportunity to be inspired by.*

*We would also like to express our gratitude to our supervisor Ziad El-Awad who has been supporting and guiding us throughout the whole journey from a vague question statement to a full-fledged bachelor's thesis.*

*Furthermore, we would like to dedicate this thesis to all the brave mothers that choose to become entrepreneurs!*

---

*Molly Eklund*

*Isa Stinger*

*Stina Svensson*

*“If I wouldn't have kids, I would probably just work myself to death so having kids and running a company is pretty good for your health.”*

# Table of contents

<b>Sammanfattning</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 Literature review</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Motherhood as a barrier for entrepreneurship	10
2.2 Family friendly policies and entrepreneurship	11
2.3 The entrepreneurial process	11
2.3.1 Opportunity recognition	12
2.4 Motivational factors for entrepreneurship	13
2.5 Theoretical framework	15
2.6 Summary	16
<b>3 Methodology</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1 Research strategy	17
3.2 Research design	18
3.3 Selection	18
3.3.1 Selection of literature	18
3.3.2 Selection of empirical data	19
3.4 Data collection method	22
3.4.1 Data collection of background and general information	22
3.4.2 Data collection of motivation to start a business	23
3.5 Data analysis method	23
3.6 Reliability and validity	25
<b>4 Empirical findings</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Aggregated themes	27
4.1.1 Motivational theme 1: To spend more time with children/child	28
4.1.1.1 The want to spend more time with children/child	28
4.1.1.2 The need to spend more time with children/child	29
4.1.2 Motivational theme 2: To be a role model/inspiration for children/child	31
4.1.3 Motivational theme 3: To be a role model/inspiration for mothers	32
4.2 Summary	33
<b>5 Analysis</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Motivational factors	35
5.1.1 Pull factors	35
5.1.1.1 The want to spend more time with children/child (A)	35

5.1.1.2 Be a role model/inspiration for children/child (C)	36
5.1.1.3 Be a role model/inspiration for mothers (D)	36
5.1.2 Push factors	37
5.1.2.1 The need to spend more time with children/child (B)	37
5.2 Externally and internally stimulated opportunity recognition	38
5.2.1 Externally stimulated opportunity recognition	38
5.2.2 Internally stimulated opportunity recognition	39
5.3 Summary	39
<b>6 Conclusions and discussion</b>	<b>41</b>
6.1 Conclusions	41
6.2 Discussion	43
6.2.1 Contributions to existing research	46
6.2.2 Suggestions for further research	46
<b>References</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>51</b>

# 1 Introduction

*The introduction chapter presents a background and description of the thesis topic followed by a problematization that culminates in the purpose statement where the question statement is presented.*

The struggle to balance family life and work has been a continuous struggle for parents (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). However, the effects of having children seem to affect mothers in greater occurrence than fathers in their careers (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). There has been extensive research made on the effects of motherhood on female careers and more recently, research on how family life and children affects entrepreneurship has been more frequently executed (Cardella, Hernández-Sánchez & Sánchez-García, 2020a). The large gender gap within the entrepreneurial world has motivated further research on the reasons behind it (Marlow, 2014). With motherhood being a studied inhibitor of female career progression, motherhood within entrepreneurship has recently become a more researched topic (Cardella et al. 2020a). However it is still a less attractive research topic and several areas are still left unexplored (Naldi, Baù, Ahl & Markowska, 2019). Some studies have examined and discussed the different negative implications that the different aspects of motherhood may have on the ability to pursue and entertain an entrepreneurial career (Ladge, Eddleston & Sugiyama, 2019; Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Generally, the research conducted regarding mother entrepreneurship, which is defined as mothers that has founded a business or venture (Maritz & Thongprovati, 2010), is focused on the aspects of motherhood that may hinder and inhibit the mother from pursuing an entrepreneurial career (Ladge, Eddleston & Sugiyama, 2019; Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Several factors such as unequal responsibility for household work, family friendly policies at work, access to childcare and unequal gender norms have been thoroughly researched and the common perception is that many of these aspects of motherhood inhibits entrepreneurship and sets barriers for mothers to become entrepreneurs (Cardella, Hernández-Sánchez & Sánchez-García, 2020a; Soares & Sidun, 2021). Motherhood and its implications seems to be assumed to be linked with the lesser number of female entrepreneurs in the field (Ladge et al., 2019). However, a recent Swedish study suggests that more mothers become entrepreneurs than



fathers (Yang & Kacperczyk, 2023) and that a trend of mothers becoming entrepreneurs has arised.

Although many of the effects that family life and children may have on entrepreneurship have been previously discussed and researched, we argue that there is a lack of research made on how motherhood may have positive effects on entrepreneurship. The trend that more mothers are becoming entrepreneurs, mentioned by Yang and Kacperczyk (2023), justifies more research on mother entrepreneurship from a positive perspective. We argue that rather than identifying what can hinder mothers from becoming entrepreneurs, there is a need for identifying what drives them to become entrepreneurs. To even out the gender gap in entrepreneurship is of great importance (Rietveld & Patel, 2022). Therefore we argue that researching an area where female entrepreneurship is more prevalent than male entrepreneurship, which parenthood is since more mothers than fathers become entrepreneurs (Yang & Kacperczyk, 2023), is of utmost importance. Therefore, this essay aims to examine and investigate how motherhood can generate positive motivational factors that drive mothers to become entrepreneurs and how it may affect their journey to identify opportunities.

The purpose of this essay is to explore and understand how motherhood may positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur. By investigating the existence and nature of motivational factors related to motherhood in the context of entrepreneurship, this thesis will contribute to existing research with a new perspective on mother entrepreneurship. Specifically, it aims to identify the potential motivational factors and their characteristics as well as how they function. Through the exploration of an under-researched area, this thesis seeks to generate new insights that may inspire and motivate further research. This study aspires to cultivate a broad and more nuanced perception of the positive relationship between motherhood and entrepreneurship and by doing so, contribute to a more enlightened discussion in the field of mother entrepreneurship. This essay may also contribute to a more positive and inspiring outlook on motherhood within entrepreneurship and defeat fears, distrusts and negative assumptions regarding motherhood and entrepreneurship combined.

The purpose of the essay is to be fulfilled by the answering of the research question:

- *Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur? If so, what can characterize them and how can they function?*

To investigate this question statement, a qualitative multiple case study with semi-structured interviews of ten participating mother entrepreneurs with children aged 0-16 at the start of their business will be conducted.

## 2 Literature review

*The chapter firstly provides a background of the prior research made on different barriers that motherhood may create for entrepreneurship. Family friendly policies and its connection to entrepreneurial activities are then introduced. Furthermore, theories about the entrepreneurial process are presented with a detailed explanation of the routes to opportunity recognition. Finally, theory on push and pull and motivational factors related to entrepreneurship are stated followed by a creation of a theoretical framework showing how opportunity recognition and motivational factors connect.*

### 2.1 Motherhood as a barrier for entrepreneurship

Prior research of entrepreneurship with focus on gender has concluded that females are affected negatively by the field being dominated by men (Ladge et al., 2019). More research has been conducted on how females identify and position themselves in entrepreneurship and how it is shaped by the concept *imposter fears* (Ladge et al., 2019). Imposter fear is defined as a feeling of being intellectually successful but not being able to truly believe it (Ladge et al., 2019). The concept refers to a person who has a hard time seeing their accomplishments and depreciates their own success even though it may appear differently from an external perspective (Ladge et al., 2019). Ladge et al. (2019) describes the idea and relates it to mothers engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Ladge et al. (2019) explains that motherhood combined with running your own business can be a contributing factor in imposter fears, and can intensify it (Ladge et al., 2019). It is explained that mothers are refraining from identifying themselves as entrepreneurs due to the negative association of not being able to combine motherhood and work successfully (Ladge et al., 2019). The fear that arises among mothers running their own business is being perceived as a bad mother who does not prioritize her children, which hinders the mother to further pursue her entrepreneurial career (Ladge et al., 2019).

An additional barrier mothers face on the behalf of their entrepreneurial activities is the amount of time and effort they put into their household (Wu, Li & Zhang, 2019). In the labor force, including the entrepreneurial field, the existence of a gender gap is still very much present (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). This gender gap is also shown in family/work life situations

where mothers tend to take on additional responsibility at home (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Women care for their children and spend time on them in a much larger range than men and put a lot more hours into household work, despite having a job outside the home (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). As a consequence, mothers have less time available to focus on their work responsibilities (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). The society still has the social norms that the responsibilities for chores existing in a household falls in the women's domain (Wu et al., 2019). It is discussed that when mother entrepreneurs experience greater responsibility in their household, the greater the conflicts will be in the family and work situation (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). This displays a small portion of the researched difficulties of a mother's role in the entrepreneurial world.

## 2.2 Family friendly policies and entrepreneurship

The institutional context in terms of family policies has an impact on the way mothers may choose to become entrepreneurs (Markowska, Ahl & Naldi, 2022). Markowska et al. (2022) discuss how the choice to pursue entrepreneurship as a career was made among mothers (Markowska et al., 2022). They divided the reasons for pursuing entrepreneurship into two different aspects. Firstly, the institutional prerequisites to have family friendly policies at work and gender equality as a norm led to *Entrepreneurship as plan A*, which meant that the decision to pursue entrepreneurship was made as a choice and seen as a career opportunity (Markowska et al., 2022). The other option, *Entrepreneurship as plan B*, arose with other institutional prerequisites such as not having family-friendly policies at work and women being assumed to prioritize childcare (Markowska et al., 2022). *Entrepreneurship as plan B* was referred to as a way to combine family with work because they had to (Markowska et al., 2022).

## 2.3 The entrepreneurial process

Entrepreneurship as a field of study is defined as “the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited” (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Therefore, the sources of opportunities alongside the process of discovery, evaluation and exploitation are studied (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

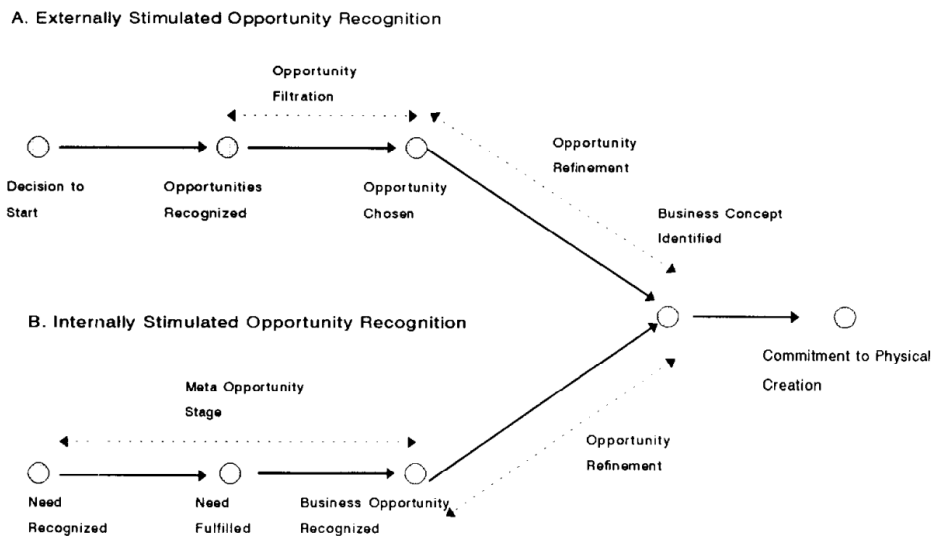
### 2.3.1 Opportunity recognition

A major part of the entrepreneurial process is the recognition of opportunities (Bhave, 1994). The path of opportunity recognition has been divided into two different approaches or routes (Bhave, 1994). The first route is defined as *Externally stimulated opportunity recognition* and the second is defined as *Internally stimulated opportunity recognition* (Bhave, 1994). This is shown in the model *Opportunity recognition sequence in entrepreneurial venture creation* (see figure 1) created by Bhave (1994).

The externally stimulated recognition process refers to the entrepreneurs that made the decision to start a venture before identifying opportunities (Bhave, 1994). In this case, the entrepreneurs wanted to create a venture because of personal and environmental circumstances rather than seeing potential in and pursuing a specific opportunity (Bhave, 1994). Some examples brought up from the article's research was when someone felt tired of working in the same role without chance of promotion, lost their job because of relocation, or simply because it was the right time in their life to quit (Bhave, 1994). A common trait for this group of entrepreneurs was that they recognized more opportunities than they chose to pursue (Bhave, 1994). In order not to be distracted by these many opportunities and choose the right ones to exploit, the aim to start a venture was followed by a search to align the entrepreneurs' resources with market needs (Bhave, 1994). There is a filtration of opportunities for the ones that are possible to pursue with the hand of resources of the entrepreneur and only (Bhave, 1994).

The internally simulated opportunity recognition however, follows a different process. When the opportunity recognition is internally stimulated, the recognition happens before the decision to start a new venture is made (Bhave, 1994). Instead of the future entrepreneurs knowing that they wanted to pursue an entrepreneurial challenge, they discovered a *need* to be fulfilled (Bhave, 1994). Whilst trying to fulfill this need themselves or with help of others, they would come up with a solution they did not yet recognize as a business opportunity (Bhave, 1994). This stage is referred to as the meta-opportunity stage in figure 1. (Bhave, 1994). After solutions were developed and the business opportunities were recognized, the decision to start a venture was made (Bhave, 1994).

After these three stages for both the internally and externally simulated opportunity recognition culminated in the decision to pursue a specific opportunity, the *opportunity refinement* was initiated (Bhave, 1994). *Opportunity refinement* was defined as “massaging an idea until it made it a good one” by one of the study participants in the article (Bhave, 1994). After the refinement and development of the opportunity and idea, the business concept was identified (Bhave, 1994).



**FIGURE 1** Opportunity recognition sequences in entrepreneurial venture creation.

Figure 1. Opportunity recognition sequence in entrepreneurial venture creation (Bhave, 1994)

## 2.4 Motivational factors for entrepreneurship

An entrepreneurs’ motivation differs and depends on several different factors (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). Laure Humbert and Drew (2010) describe the disparity in entrepreneurship between the genders and that it is based on social factors influencing how a female or male is motivated. Moore and Buttner, Duchéneau and Orhan, Orhan and scott (1997, 2000, 2001 cited in Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010) describe different push and pull factors that awaken peoples’ entrepreneurial motivation.

The push and pull theory has its origin in an article written by Dann (1977). Dann (1977) presented the theory while doing research on what attracted and motivated people to travel. Push and pull is divided into two different categories on how they affect a persons’ motivation (Dann, 1977). The first definition of the theory is made on the correlation to tourism where the author

defines the push factor as something people are affected by when something is of a negative sense, for example the need to escape (Dann, 1977). The pull factor, on the other hand, is defined as something positive that attracts people to a certain place, for example sunshine (Dann, 1977).

Danns' (1977) theory has been developed and is now applicable in a wide range. In entrepreneurship, the push factor is defined as an element that tends to give people a push in the entrepreneurial direction which for example is a persons' need to increase their income or the need to receive work life balance (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). The pull factors are described as components that draw a person to become an entrepreneur (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). Laure Humbert and Drew (2010) explain the pull factor as a wish for something. Examples of entrepreneurial pull factors could be the wish for personal satisfaction and personal achievement, or a persons' desire for independence.

In the context of different motivational factors for mother entrepreneurs, push and pull factors can also be applied within mother entrepreneurship (Maritz & Thongprovati, 2010). Push and pull factors are described, like Dann (1977) said, as either being formed from a need which is created from a negative aspect, or formed from an opportunity which is created from a positive aspect (Maritz & Thongprovati, 2010). It is mentioned that mother entrepreneurs are affected by both push factors and pull factors by Maritz and Thongprovati (2010), but the primary focus is on describing the need that arises in mothers. There is a narrow explanation on the motivational factors in motherhood that activate the entrepreneurial interest (Maritz & Thongprovati, 2010), but leaves room for more in depth research.

The study made by Laure Humbert and Drew (2010) have concluded that a strong motivational factor for entrepreneurship among women was the ability to gain extended flexibility, both with working hours but also with their free time. The different entrepreneurial motivations and entrepreneurial directions for females are also researched by Cardella, Hernández-Sánchez and Sánchez-García (2020b). They explain that women focus on opportunities that lead to flexible working hours easy to combine with their personal life (Cardella et al., 2020b). The desire for flexibility is functioning as a motivational factor for women to start businesses and gain personal independence (Cardella et al., 2020b).

However, Laure Humbert and Drew (2010) came to the conclusion that the push and pull framework has its limitations when creating entrepreneurial motivation. In order to fully understand the framework it has to be combined and intervene with other factors such as cultural, social, economical (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). For example, the authors discuss that family status needs to be taken into account, especially when discussing the motivational factor for women to achieve a better work/life balance (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). Laure Humbert and Drew (2010) continue to describe the importance of examining every factor from an environmental perspective and putting it in real life situations.

## 2.5 Theoretical framework

In order to examine and investigate motherhood as a generator of positive motivational factors on the choice to become an entrepreneur with the use of the theory presented, a simplified combined theoretical framework combining push and pull theory with the start of the opportunity recognition process, has been developed. The framework will be used to categorize and analyze potential motivational factors from a perspective of how they function as push or pull drivers and whereas they are part of the internally or externally stimulated opportunity recognition route.

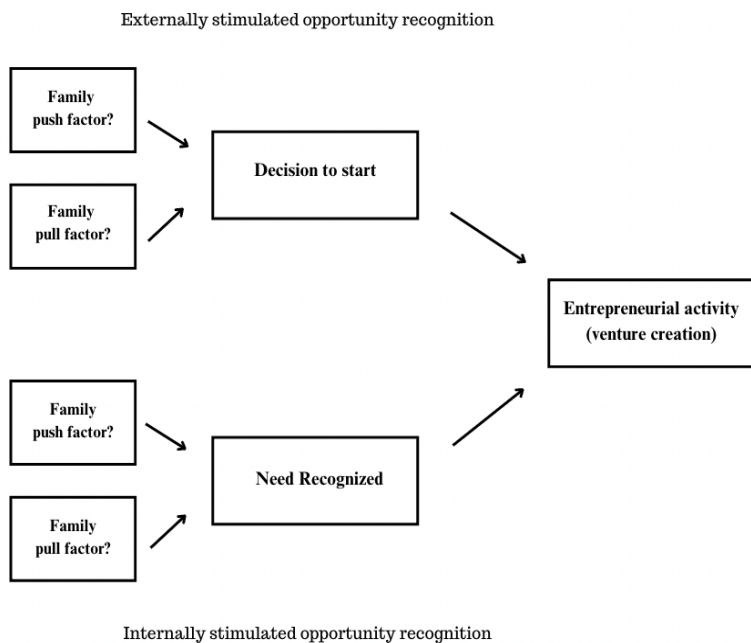


Figure 2. Theoretical framework



## 2.6 Summary

The literature review provides an overview of the different theories related to the purpose of this essay. Existing studies made on mother entrepreneurship and the current negative stigma around being a mother and engaging in entrepreneurship were presented and the role of family friendly policies in pursuit of entrepreneurship was raised. Lastly, theories on push and pull factors and externally/internally stimulated opportunity recognition routes were presented, summarized and combined into a framework. This framework will make use as an analytical categorization tool to be applied to identified factors in order to gain better understanding of their function.

## 3 Methodology

*The methodology chapter encompasses the research approach that has been applied to this study. Initially, an explanation of the research strategy is presented followed by a description of the research design. Furthermore, the chapter describes the selection of literature and empirical data, the different methods applied on data collection and data analysis and ends with a description of how reliability and validity is addressed.*

### 3.1 Research strategy

Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) define the qualitative research method as the focus of words rather than numbers and produce a detailed description of the context being studied. Since the research of motherhood as a motivational factor requires an investigation of subjective interpretations of personal motivational factors, it lies within the definition of the qualitative research method. Therefore, the empirical study will be conducted with a qualitative research approach.

Furthermore, Bell et al. (2019) defines three major research approaches: deductive, inductive and abductive. The research approach of choice for this essay is an abductive approach, which is a combination of the deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive reasoning includes developing a framework that can be used to structure and shape the research as well as to base hypotheses on (Bell et al., 2019). Therefore, it can be argued that the development of the framework based on the gathered theory of push and pull and opportunity recognition that will be used as an analytical and structural tool for analyzing the empirical data, has prominent deductive features. The deductive features of this thesis is therefore showcased in the use of the theoretically developed framework as a tool in the analysis. Since the purpose of the research however will be to discover new finds and conclusions made from analyzing the data, it has other prominent features that resonate with the inductive research approach. This since the approach as stated by Bell et al. (2019) typically includes generalizations and pattern, theme or category identification from analysis of the gathered data. The inductive features of this thesis are therefore showcased by a thematic analysis that is performed after the collection of empirical data by defining aggregated themes.

The combination of one analysis with inductive features followed by an analysis with deductive features culminates in an abductive approach.

## 3.2 Research design

This study was conducted as a multiple-case study with a collection of a variation of multiple data to ensure the validity of the study (Bell et al., 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019) a researcher using a multiple-case study approach focuses on how the different cases can be contrasted to discover patterns rather than focusing on one specific context. This provides the researcher with the ability to distinguish what can be considered mutual and singular across the cases, creating a reflection on the results (Bell et al., 2019). The ability to include several case interviews is therefore of utmost importance in order to analyze similarities from different interviews and optimally determine potential patterns of the mothers motivational factors.

## 3.3 Selection

### 3.3.1 Selection of literature

The literature search began within the field of entrepreneurship and primarily among articles published at *Journal of Business Venturing* and at *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. While looking for relevant literature, the interest for family within entrepreneurship was awakened which contributed to the choice of topic in this essay.

As presented in the first section of the literature review, extensive research on negative aspects of becoming a mother related to entrepreneurship has been previously executed. However, the positive aspects of what being a mother brings to entrepreneurship, are harder to discover research about. Bell et al. (2019) states that this pattern of seeing firm research in a specific area in contrast with little to no research in a different angle, is often discovered. This was seen as an opportunity to make a valuable research contribution and laid the ground for the purpose of this thesis.

Furthermore, Bell et al. (2019) states the importance of source evaluation when online sourcing to ensure that it is a trustworthy source. Some sources are misleading and incorrect and Bell et al. (2019) underlines the significance of being selective in the decision of sources. Therefore, attention was paid to ensuring that the sources were reliable. In line with what Bell et al. (2019) recommends, the literature selected in this essay is solely retrieved from scholarly websites such as Google Scholar, Science direct and Lub search and were screened to ensure their trustworthiness from various criterias. Having an author with a high number of citations or having a high number of citations, being published in a peer-reviewed journal, as well as rank of the journal were all taken into consideration in the selection.

### 3.3.2 Selection of empirical data

The selection of the empirical data is based on purposive sampling (Bell et al., 2019). The aim with this method is that the sampling is made in alignment with the focus of the research (Bell et al., 2019) and can be described as when the researcher chose their participants within a certain frame that fits the research question. This allows the researcher to provide valuable information and to stay in control over their study which is beneficial in this study since it has a clear focus and a rather limited empirical circumference (Bell et al., 2019). This kind of sampling method contains multiple approaches and based on the nature of the studies, the strategy differs (Bell et al., 2019). In order to find interview objects, a post was posted in a Swedish facebook group for female entrepreneurs asking if mothers who have become entrepreneurs would like to participate in an interview for a thesis about entrepreneurship. The post included the criterias to participate in the study. It was made sure that the mothers remembered details about the starting process of their business to ensure the accuracy of their answers. The post was formulated with limited information to solely include the necessary knowledge to participate in the interview. This decision was made to reduce the biases that could arise if too much information were released about the study. The entrepreneurs were then contacted and asked to schedule a suitable time to perform the interview. If the mothers were interested in knowing more about the essay, the aim with the study could be discussed superficially after the interview was finished.

The selection of the group of people that were interviewed was sampled with a purposive sampling approach called snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is described by Bell et

al. (2019) as “a sampling technique in which the researcher samples initially a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research”. The post in the facebook group that gathered a number of participants can be described as the gathering of the initial small group of participants. Suitable mother entrepreneurs that applied from the group were asked to both participate, and to refer other qualified entrepreneurs to participate in this study. This facilitated the process to find a broader group of qualified mother entrepreneurs willing to participate in the study. Snowball sampling was therefore central in this study in order to recruit more qualified mother entrepreneurs.

The term entrepreneurship generally encompasses many different definitions and meanings but is limited to the definition as the founding of ventures, businesses and startups that generate income in this essay to simplify the research. Moreover, to define the study, the empirical selection is limited to mother entrepreneurs in Sweden that started their venture following having children.

The choice to solely include mothers that started their business *after* having children was made since the study investigates motherhood as a motivational factor in the choice to become an entrepreneur which means that the children already needed to be present in the mothers’ lives before the decision was made. The choice to limit the selection to Swedish entrepreneurs was made partially because of the geographical access to Swedish participants. Additionally, the choice to limit the selection to mothers with children in the ages 0 through 16, was made in order to confine the study to mothers who still were responsible for, and were still impacted by their children in their everyday life to a large extent. This reasoning was made under the assumption that children under the age of 16 still lived at home and required parenting.

The criterias put in place for for participation in the thesis are:

- Has started a business/venture
- Is a mother of one child or several children before starting a business
- Had a child/children within the ages of 0-16 at the time of starting her business
- Has detailed memory of starting the business

An overview of the interviewed mother entrepreneurs background information is presented below (see chart 1) that showcases that the criteria has been met. It was made sure that these criterias would be met by the participants by including the information in the group post. If confusion arose, it was ensured that the criterias were communicated and met before the entrepreneur made time for a meeting.

Participants	Age of mother (at the start of business)	No. children (at the start of business)	Age of children (at the start of business)	Business
Entrepreneur 1	23	2	1.5 & 2.5	Bridal dress design
Entrepreneur 2	36	3	2, 5 & 7	Marketing consultancy, accessories, coffee marketing
Entrepreneur 3	29	1	1,5	Film production
Entrepreneur 4	46	2	11 & 14	Branding strategy consulting
Entrepreneur 5	40	2	7 & 8	Health consulting
Entrepreneur 6	34	3	0.5, 6 & 8	Bookkeeping and accounting
Entrepreneur 7	43	2	3.5 & 11	Gardening consultancy
Entrepreneur 8	39	2	3 & 6	Business-development consultancy
Entrepreneur 9	37	2	8 & 10	Audit management consultancy
Entrepreneur 10	36	2	2 & 6	Recruitment services

Chart 1. Overview and background information of the ten interviewed entrepreneurs

### 3.4 Data collection method

The data collection from the entrepreneurs was designed with a series of semi-structured interviews, which Bell et al. (2019) describe as a data collection method commonly used in qualitative research. This data collection method consists of several predetermined questions, which not only give allowance for follow up questions but also contribute to a rich and substantial data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2017). The interviews were structured as a combination of closed and open questions. The focus was however put on the open questions to receive more elaborate and descriptive answers from the respondents. The open questions allowed the entrepreneurs to somewhat interpret the questions in their own way and made room for additional thoughts. The interviews were held online via video chats to increase the availability of the respondents. Both geographical restrictions and amount of time needed was improved by the choice to conduct the interviews online. The video chats were recorded and immediately transcribed, with the allowance of the participants, to make sure the entrepreneurs' answers were understood and summarized correctly. The ten entrepreneurs were asked if the interviews could be held in English since that is the original language the thesis statement is written in. This decision was made to ensure that the answers were correctly analyzed and interpreted when transcribed and used in the empirical chapter.

Bryman and Bell (2017) discusses the importance of anonymity and its ethical aspect. To guarantee that the entrepreneurs remain anonymous, neither the entrepreneurs nor their businesses are referred to by their name and the alias “Entrepreneur 1-10” is used instead. In addition, questions that could potentially reveal private information about the entrepreneurs were avoided to minimize the possibility of identifying the participants. This was done to ensure the anonymity of the entrepreneurs.

#### 3.4.1 Data collection of background and general information

A collection of general data about the entrepreneurs' background was gathered by a series of questions. These questions were mainly stated to gain an understanding of the entrepreneur and her family situation in terms of the amount of children had and the childrens' age at the time when the business was created. The goal of these questions was also to assist us in identifying

and recognizing any patterns that may emerge that could contribute to our research. Further, the entrepreneurs were asked about their relational status at the time when their businesses were started since being a single parent could influence the decision to become an entrepreneur and affect our results. Additionally, these questions were stated to ensure that the entrepreneurs met the criteria required for participating in this study. When the criterias to participate were confirmed, further questions regarding the entrepreneurs' businesses were asked. General information about the entrepreneurs' businesses such as business field and if their businesses is their full time job were stated. This was asked due to potential finding patterns among the different business fields and connecting it to different motivational factors. Furthermore, the participants were asked about what their risk taking looked like when they started their business. This was an important question since the level of risk can be crucial when considering to start a business.

### 3.4.2 Data collection of motivation to start a business

Secondly, the entrepreneurs were asked questions about their motivation behind starting a business. This in order to identify motivational patterns. The questions regarding motivation were not related to children or motherhood in order to receive neutral statements. Questions about whether the decision to become an entrepreneur was made before or after seeing a potential idea/solution were stated in order to investigate how the entrepreneurs were affected by their motivation. The final questions that were asked, which were focused on their child/children, targeted whether their child/children could have influenced their decision to start their business.

To ensure transparency, the complete question structure for the semi-structured interview is included in the appendix.

## 3.5 Data analysis method

A data analysis is defined as where the collected data is scaled down and analyzed (Bell et al., 2019). An extensive analysis was conducted in several methodological steps recommended and defined by Bell et al. (2019). This in order to fully understand and interpret the data and construct a solid ground from which to later draw valid conclusions. Since the analysis was



conducted from the data collected within this thesis, the analysis is identified as primary data analysis which is described as when the collector of the data also undertakes the analysis (Bell et al., 2019). The analysis was conducted in two different stages. In qualitative research, one of the two main strategies for data analysis is thematic analysis which is the approach that was chosen to analyze the empirical findings (Bell et al., 2019). The thematic analysis was initiated by coding each transcript. The coding was executed by breaking down the data into components relevant to the question statement and labeling them to better understand the data. By utilizing the question statement as a directive for the coding, the identification of codes could be restricted to identifying the ones specifically associated with the motivation behind becoming an entrepreneur in the motherhood context.

Secondly, the labeled components were compared and examined with the aim to discover links and similarities between the codes. The discovered links between the different components were used to group them together and form second order concepts formed by analyzing the common traits. Some components that were not linked to other codes were still formed to be second order concepts by a simple redefinition as a more general term. Although it is not usually done in a thematic analysis, it was deemed necessary due to the rather low number of participants and importance of including all viable components. Lastly, the second order concepts that included similar codes were matched and combined into three different third order aggregated themes by analyzing their common traits. However, one extra order was made in two cases whereas the concepts were diverse but could still be identified as one overarching theme. The diversity was primarily manifested in differentiating approaches toward the common goal, thereby leading to a definition of two distinct approaches within the aggregate theme. The first order components, second order concepts and aggregate themes were all summarized and presented in a chart (see chart 2).

After identifying the aggregate themes, a subsequent identification process was initiated. By utilizing the aggregate themes as a foundation, four different motivational factors were identified. Within the scope of one theme, two distinct approaches were outlined and recognized as two separate motivational factors, enabling a more in depth and complex analysis. To further structure and summarize the data and allow an easier overview and read thread of the relevant

findings, two different charts were created that display the prevalence of the aggregated themes and the motivational factors (see chart 2 & 3).

After the different motivational factors were identified, the second stage of analysis was initiated. The approach that was chosen to further analyze the motivational factors with the use of existing theory can be likened with a deductive content analysis (Bell et al., 2019). The presented theory was used to analyze how the motivational factors work in the sense of being push or pull factors and whether they were part of internally stimulated or externally stimulated opportunity recognition. The framework that was created as a simplified combination of the two theories, motivational *push and pull factors* and *the opportunity recognition process*, was used as an analytical tool to categorize the motivational factors as part of either externally or internally stimulated opportunity recognition and mainly whether they work as a push or pull factor. The analysis was conducted by comparing the motivational factors with the theory and linking the data with theory in order to categorize it in the updated framework.

### 3.6 Reliability and validity

External reliability is referred to as to what degree a study can be replicated and is stated as a tough criteria to meet for a qualitative study as an environmental context is hard to freeze (Bell et al., 2019). Since the study is qualitative and rather subjective to the entrepreneurs lives, it is hard to ensure a high level of external reliability. A replication of the study has to be conducted with similar social situations and life factors which is nearly impossible to conduct or find in our case. However, since this study strives to identify patterns of motivational factors rather than proving or disproving existing ones, this may not be of great interference for the quality of the thesis.

Internal reliability is referred to as whether the group performing the study agrees with each other regarding the empirical findings (Bell et al., 2019). To improve the internal reliability we coded the interviews separately to later discuss each identified component. We then communicated our opinions and found consensus.

Inter-rater reliability is defined as the consistency of decisions in subjective observation recording (Bell et al., 2019). Inter-rater reliability is a relevant criteria to address in this thesis, as there is much data from open-ended interview questions that may be viewed differently being interpreted and coded. To ensure full transparency, the transcripts from the interviews are included in the appendix, whereas readers can view the original findings without any subjective judgements.

External validity is defined as the degree to which the performed study can be generic in other social situations and settings (Bell et al., 2019). External validity can be problematic in qualitative research due to the limited number of participants, which is the case in this study. Due to the limited circumference of this essay, the external validity is difficult to address.

Internal validity refers to the association between the observations found by the researcher and the theoretical ideas they prosper (Bell et al., 2019). The use of the abductive method means that the theory existing is increasing the internal validity.

## 4 Empirical findings

*This chapter presents the empirical findings collected from the semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs 1-10. The findings are presented as three aggregated motivational themes related to motherhood. These themes are explained and displayed in a data structure presented in this chapter. The empirical findings are presented with support from quotes gathered from the interviews. Lastly, two different charts are introduced showing first the prevalence over every theme and then developed into different motivational factors.*

### 4.1 Aggregated themes

Three aggregated motivational themes related to motherhood were formed from the findings of the empirical data. The most prevalent theme was *To spend more time with children/child*, which was detected in 8 of the 10 entrepreneurs. The other themes, *Be a role model/inspiration for children/child* and *Be a role model/inspiration for mothers*, were less prominent with the prevalence rates 4/10 and 3/10.

#### 4.1.1 Motivational theme 1: To spend more time with children/child

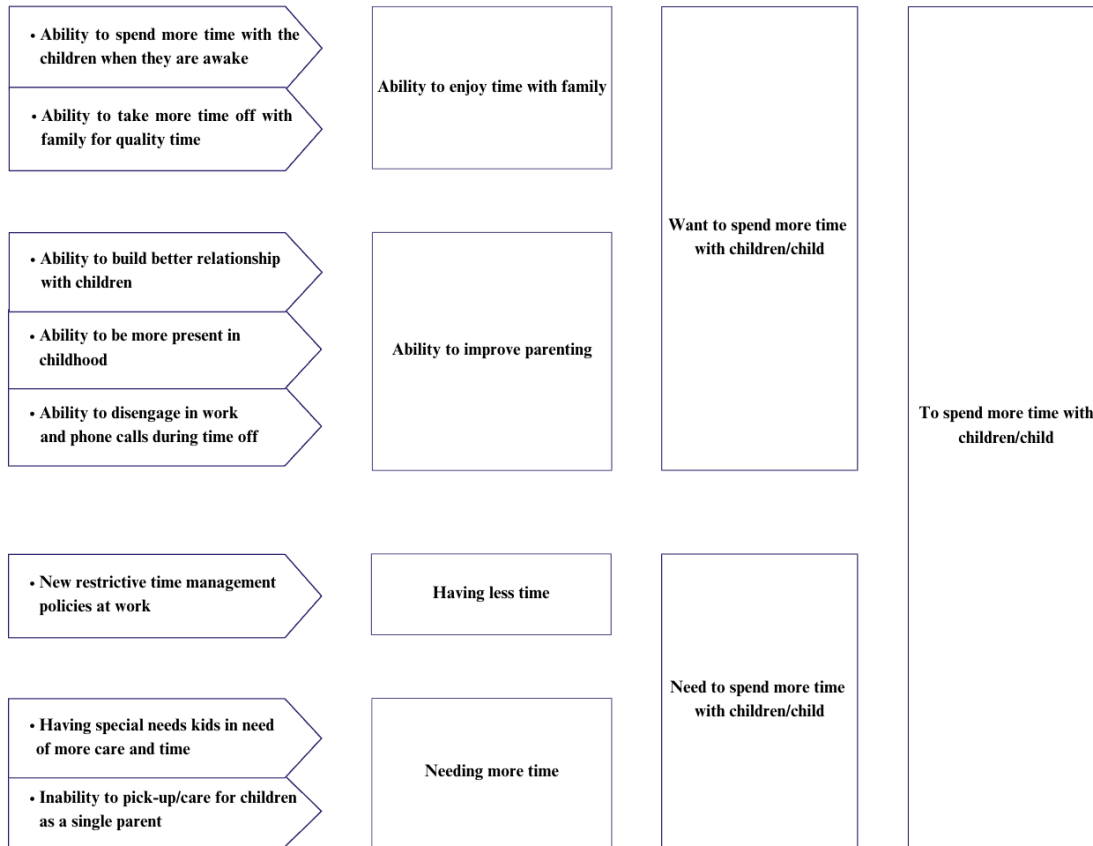


Figure 3. Aggregated theme model; theme 1: *To spend more time with children/child*

The first identified theme among the entrepreneurs was *To spend more time with children/child* whereas the mothers were motivated by the opportunity to spend more time with their children by becoming entrepreneurs. It was found that the time management aspect of entrepreneurship was very advantageous and motivating for mother entrepreneurs. This theme also included two different approaches whereas there was a *want* and a *need* to spend more time with children (shown in figure 3).

##### 4.1.1.1 The want to spend more time with children/child

There were several components identified related to spending more time with children in the interviews. Being able to take more time off for quality time with children as an entrepreneur was one commonly recognized component that was apparent in the interviews 1, 4, 7 and in the interview with entrepreneur 5, who stated “*If they have a day off from daycare or school I could*

*plan my time to actually be off together with them.*”. The ability to allocate their hours after when their children were awake to spend more time with them was also an identified component in the interview with entrepreneur 1 who stated *“I had all the bad things about having children, so I wanted to have the good parts as well. That means spending a lot of time with them. I think having children was one of my biggest motivations for starting a business. I could work when they fell asleep so I could hang out with them more”*. These two components form the second order concept “Ability to enjoy more time with family”. Whereas the ability to enjoy more free time with children is seen as a motivator to become an entrepreneur.

Furthermore, the ability to be more present in the children’s/child’s life was also identified as a component in the interviews 4, 7 and 9. Entrepreneur 9 stated *“I wanted the freedom to be more involved with my children and have more time with my family”*. The ability to have more time to build on relationships with children was also an identified component that was found in the interview with entrepreneur 4 who stated *“I think sadly I lost time with my kids when they were small. We had an extra keeper helping us to pick them up at daycare center etcetera and I really would like to do this in order to give them some kind of a payback”*. Lastly, the ability to disengage in work and phone calls during free time was apparent as a motivator component in the interview 10 where the entrepreneur stated *“I was canoeing with my kids but as soon as my work called, I had to row into shore. I always had to answer to someone else as an employee”*. These three components form the second order concept “Ability to improve parenting” whereas the common motivational driver was to improve the involvement and relationship with children.

The two second order concepts “Ability to improve parenting” and “Ability to enjoy more time with family” culminate in the defined approach *Want to spend more time with children/child* to the aggregate theme *To spend more time with children*.

#### 4.1.1.2 The need to spend more time with children/child

The second aspect of this theme is the *need* to spend more time with children/child which was found among entrepreneurs 3, 6 and 7.

The first component, new restrictive time management policies at work, was mentioned by entrepreneur 3 where she stated “*my boss didn't want me to work on the train anymore. Then I realized that it was too big of a personal sacrifice to me barely seeing my kids and so I thought that it wasn't worth it and knew I needed to change my situation.*”. This component is developed into the second order concept “Having less time” which represents factors that change and minimizes the amount of time available to spend with children.

The second component, having special needs kids in need of more care and time, appeared in the interview with entrepreneur 6 who stated “*my boys had special needs so it was to have more time with my boys and being able to decide my working hours. I needed to spend a lot of time going to the daycare center and they needed a lot more support since they had special needs.*”. Lastly the inability to pickup/care for children/child as a single parent was found in interview 7.

Entrepreneur 7 stated “*I didn't think it was possible with my current employment to be a single parent and I wanted to separate from my children's father.*”. The two components are identified as the second order concept “needing more time” that includes situational factors that require more time with children.

The second order concepts of “Having less time” and “Needing more time” culminate in the defined approach *Need to spend more time with children/child* to the aggregate theme: *To spend more time with children/child.*

The two different approaches of needing and wanting to spend more time with children embodies separate components and concepts found in the empirical data and may therefore be identified as two different motivational factors.

#### 4.1.2 Motivational theme 2: To be a role model/inspiration for children/child

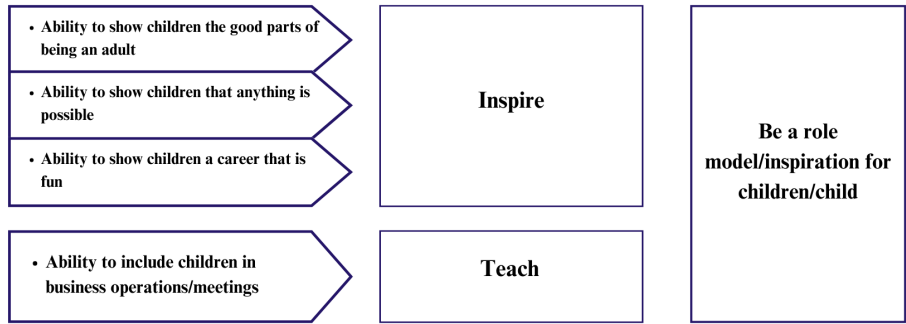


Figure 4. Aggregated theme model; theme 1: *Be a role model/inspiration for children/child*

The second identified aggregated theme that motivated mothers to become entrepreneurs was to *Be a role model/inspiration for children/child*. The theme has been identified due to several appearing components. These, shown in figure 4, consist of four different components and together forming the aggregated theme and have been visible at four of the interviewed entrepreneurs. Entrepreneur 1, 3, 4 and 8.

The first component is the ability to show children the good parts of being an adult which occurred in the interview with entrepreneur 1 who stated “*It was also important to show my children that it was fun being an adult and that you could do whatever you wanted.*”. The second component identified is the ability to show their children that anything is possible which was mentioned in several interviews by entrepreneurs 1, 3, 4 and 8. “*Another thing that impacted the decision to be an entrepreneur was that I would like to show my kids that it's possible to do whatever you want.*” stated Entrepreneur 4. Entrepreneur 8 said “*It is important for me as a parent to be a good role model and to show my kids that you can be what you want.*”.

Furthermore, the ability to show children a career that is fun is a component mentioned by one of the interviewed entrepreneurs, entrepreneur 3. She stated that she wanted to show her children that entrepreneurship is possible and a good thing to do. These three mentioned components form the second order concept “Inspire” as they are all related to the want to inspire their children/child.



The last component is the ability to include children in business operations/meetings and was found at entrepreneur 1 who said “*I sat and made those buttons for the dresses and I taught the kids how to do them too*”. This component is the only aspect that forms the other second order concept “Teach” in the aggregated theme model as it shows the willingness of teaching your children/child about entrepreneurship and how you can work as an entrepreneur.

The two different second order concepts, “inspire” and “teach”, together culminate into the aggregated theme: *Be a role model/inspiration for children/child*.

#### 4.1.3 Motivational theme 3: To be a role model/inspiration for mothers

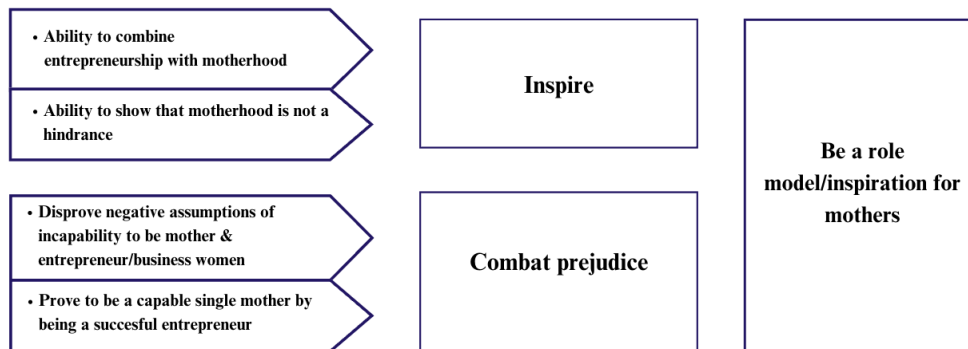


Figure 5. Aggregated theme model; theme 1: *Role model/inspiration for mothers*

The third identified aggregated theme was *Be a role model/inspiration for mothers*.

The want to show that it is possible to combine motherhood and entrepreneurship successfully was a detected component in two interviews, entrepreneur 3 and 4. “*I was breastfeeding during film shoots with my second one all the time and I think it was important to show others that it's possible to do both*” stated by entrepreneur 3. The second component, the ability to show that motherhood is not a hindrance, was mentioned in the interview with entrepreneur 4, “*I truly wanted to show that it is not a problem to have kids if you want to be an entrepreneur. It's a good thing!*“. These two components culminated in the common concept “Inspire”. The components are all related to inspire and positively affect mothers or future mothers to become entrepreneurs.

Another component was detected from entrepreneur 1 whereas entrepreneurship was seen as a way to prove to others and other mothers that she was a responsible and capable mother providing for her family despite being single and young. *“People love to say - well you don't know anything about living or bringing up children”, so I think I was eager to show everyone that it was possible and that I will grow really good adults even if I was just 20 years old.*” stated entrepreneur 1. Lastly, another component was detected in the interview with entrepreneur 4, where the want to disprove negative associations with juggling entrepreneurship and motherhood was a part of the motivation. She stated *“I was so sick of the assumption that successful business women or entrepreneurs were bad mothers, and that good mothers were bad entrepreneur(s), I wanted to prove them wrong!”*. A second order concept, “Combat prejudice” was formed from these two components whereas the general agenda was to defeat negative views/stereotypes and prejudice regarding motherhood and entrepreneurship.

The combination of the two concepts “Combat prejudice” and “Inspire” culminate in an aggregated theme: *to Be a role model/inspiration for mothers.*

## 4.2 Summary

The chart below displays the prevalence of the identified motivational themes related to motherhood in the study. There is also a prevalence rate presented which demonstrates the proportions of the prevalence to the whole sample.

<i>Identified Motivational themes related to motherhood:</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Prevalence rate</i>
To spend more time with children/child	8x	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10	8/10
Role model/inspiration for children/child	4x	1, 3, 4, 8	4/10
Role model/inspiration for mothers	3x	1,3, 4	3/10

Chart 2. Summary of the assembled motivational themes related to motherhood and the prevalence among the entrepreneurs.

From the motivational themes, four motivational factors (A-D) can be identified that relate to motherhood, which is displayed in the chart 3. The prevalence rate presents the proportions of the prevalence to the whole sample.

<i>Identified Motivational factors related to motherhood:</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Prevalence rate</i>
A. The want to spend more time with children/child	6x	1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10	6/10
B. The need to spend more time with children/child	3x	3, 6, 7	3/10
C. Role model/inspiration for children/child	4x	1, 3, 4, 8	4/10
D. Role model/inspiration for mothers	3x	1, 3, 4	3/10

Chart 3. Summary of the assembled motivational factors related to motherhood and the prevalence among the entrepreneurs.

## 5 Analysis

*In the following chapter, an analysis on the empirical findings will be made based on the theoretical framework (figure 2). The identified motivational factors related to motherhood are categorized into push and pull factors, and then analyzed on the different routes in opportunity recognition.*

The empirical findings present a data structure with three aggregated motivational themes related to motherhood. These themes are developed into four different motivational factors that the mother entrepreneurs got positively affected by. The identified factors are *The want to spend more time with children/child*, *The need to spend more time with children/child*, *Role model/inspiration for children/child*, and *Role model/inspiration for mothers*. These will be further analyzed with the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

### 5.1 Motivational factors

As previously presented theory suggests, motivational factors can be identified as either push or pull factors (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010). Therefore, an analysis of each identified motivational factor as a pull or push factor will be conducted in order to align them with the presented theoretical framework (see figure 2).

#### 5.1.1 Pull factors

As stated earlier in the thesis, a pull factor is a motivational factor that is being formed from a want or opportunity of improvement rather than a need. The pull factor is based on a desire within an individual that drives them, *pulls* them, towards entrepreneurship (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010).

##### 5.1.1.1 The want to spend more time with children/child (A)

The motivational factor *The want to spend more time with their children* (A) was the most prevalent factor with a prevalence rate of 6/10 among the entrepreneurs. This factor can be analyzed as a pull factor since it consists of wants and desires, and an opportunity for the mother to have more time with her children. The different discovered components behind the factor were

all seen as positive possibilities to be grasped by becoming entrepreneurs. This factor is similar to and included in the same aggregate theme as motivational factor (B) *The need to spend more time with children/child* but is differentiated by the diverse components and second order concepts. Furthermore they can also be differentiated by their different motivational directions in terms of push or pull. An example from the empirical data can be used to clarify the contrast of the components and the motivational direction: Entrepreneur 1 stated that she had a good support system consisting of friends and family that could help her with childcare and that she did not *need* to be employed full-time to care for her children but that she wanted to enjoy the fun parts of having children and spend time with them. This was therefore defined as a *want* for spending more time with children. Entrepreneur 6 however, had kids with special needs that needed more support and care than she felt able to provide as an employee, and therefore can be analyzed as being in *need* of having more time with children. There is a clear differentiation in how the mothers were motivated to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneur 1 had a desire for change, hence was drawn, *pulled*, whereas entrepreneur 6 had circumstances that generated a need for change, hence was *pushed* to become an entrepreneur.

#### 5.1.1.2 Be a role model/inspiration for children/child (C)

The motivational factor *Role model/ inspiration for children/child* (C) was a frequently identified factor with the prevalence rate of 4/10 among the entrepreneurs. The motivational factor, that refers to the want or aspiration to be a role model for or to inspire their children can be analyzed as a pull factor since it is a want and desire rather than a need. An example of how it can function as a pull factor is how the want to show her children that anything is possible was a driver in becoming an entrepreneur for entrepreneur 4.

#### 5.1.1.3 Be a role model/inspiration for mothers (D)

The identified motivational factor *Role model/inspiration for mothers* (D) occurred with a rate of 3/10 among the entrepreneurs. This motivational factor is defined as a mother being motivated to start with entrepreneurial activities due to the aspiration of inspiring other mothers. This can be analyzed as a pull factor because it shows ambition and desire from the mother rather than a need. From the empirical findings examples can be illustrated from entrepreneurs 3 and 4 where

they stated the importance of showing other mothers that it is possible to be a mother and an entrepreneur at the same time.

### 5.1.2 Push factors

A push factor is defined in the theory chapter as a component that tends to *push* individuals into entrepreneurial activities. Some needs that have been identified as a push factor are the need for increasing income or improving work life balance (Laure Humbert & Drew, 2010).

#### 5.1.2.1 The need to spend more time with children/child (B)

The motivational factor *The need to spend more time with children/child (B)* was identified among 3/10 of the entrepreneurs. A portion of the entrepreneurs experienced that their employment prohibited them from spending time with their children/child. This pushed them to engage in entrepreneurship for the purpose of receiving more time with their children/child. Entrepreneur 6 describes her decision to start a business as the only opportunity to separate from her husband and still be able to take care of her two children. She stated that being a single parent requires a more flexible schedule which she did not obtain in her previous employment which pushed her into starting a business. Starting a business made it possible for the entrepreneur to part from her husband and still be able to care for and support her children.

<i>Identified Motivational factors related to motherhood:</i>	<i>Prevalence</i>	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Prevalence rate</i>
A. The want to spend more time with children/child	6x	1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10	6/10
B. The need to spend more time with children/child	3x	3, 6, 7	3/10
C. Role model/inspiration for children/child	4x	1, 3, 4, 8	4/10
D. Role model/inspiration for mothers	3x	1,3, 4	3/10
E. None identified	1x	2	1/10
Entrepreneur with one or more factor identified	9x	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	9/10

Chart 4. Summary of the assembled motivational factors related to motherhood and the prevalence among the entrepreneurs.

## 5.2 Externally and internally stimulated opportunity recognition

As previously presented in the literature review, there are two identified routes to stimulating opportunity recognition (Bhave,1994). The two different routes are defined as internally stimulated and externally stimulated and depends on whether the entrepreneur made the decision to start a business before or after discovering the business opportunity that is exploited. To identify which route to opportunity recognition the entrepreneurs took, an analysis of the different cases will be conducted.

### 5.2.1 Externally stimulated opportunity recognition

Described in the theory presented, the externally stimulated route to opportunity recognition is defined as whereas an individual makes the decision to become an entrepreneur before actually seeing an opportunity or solution and is often generated by personal and environmental circumstances (Bhave, 1994).

The majority of the entrepreneurs convey that the decision to become an entrepreneur occurred before they came up with a business idea or solution to a problem. For example, Entrepreneur 1 decided to become an entrepreneur or had the aspiration to become an entrepreneur before recognizing or seeing a specific idea, opportunity or solution. She can therefore be analyzed as a taker of the externally simulated opportunity recognition route.

However, the reason why the entrepreneurs decided to start a business differ. Entrepreneur 1, 4, 6, 7 and 10 did not have any plans on engaging in entrepreneurship before they had children. After they had children the thought of becoming an entrepreneur came to surface. This can therefore be analyzed as a result of the positive impact children have on their mothers choice of becoming an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9 however, had thoughts of becoming entrepreneurs before having children nevertheless didn't act upon them until after becoming mothers .

### 5.2.2 Internally stimulated opportunity recognition

As described previously, the internally stimulated opportunity recognition is portrayed as when an individuals' recognition of an opportunity occurs before the decision to start a venture is made. An individual identified as internally stimulated recognizes a need before the aspiration of becoming an entrepreneur. Entrepreneur 2's route to opportunity recognition can be analyzed as internally stimulated since the entrepreneur saw a need for aesthetically pleasing and practical reflexes whereas she saw a need for this on the market. Entrepreneur 2 is therefore classified as being internally stimulated in her opportunity recognition process.

## 5.3 Summary

As displayed in the theoretical framework, two routes to opportunity recognition exist. Push and pull factors are identified in the first segment of the framework and are further divided into internally stimulated and externally stimulated (see figure 6).



The entrepreneurs' identified motivational factors were analyzed as either push or pull factors where the vast majority of them were identified as pull factors. Thereafter the participants were analyzed as either internally or externally stimulated in their opportunity recognition whereas an overwhelming majority was externally stimulated. This implies that the majority of the participants were *pulled* into entrepreneurship and were externally stimulated in opportunity recognition. The identified motivational factors and their prevalence are sorted into the chart below:

Internally stimulated opportunity recognition		Externally stimulated opportunity recognition	
<i>Push factor</i>	<i>Pull factor</i>	<i>Push factor</i>	<i>Pull factor</i>
	E. None identified (2)	B. Need to have time with children/child (3,6,7)	A. Want to have time with children/child (1,4,5,7,9,10)
			C. Role model/inspiration for children/child (1,3,4,8)
			D. Role model/inspiration for mothers (1,3,4)

Chart 5. Overview over which motivational factors relate to push/pull factors and what stimulated route to opportunity recognition they promote.

The findings of the analysis are sorted into the previously theoretical framework in order to further display, map and explain the function of the motivational push and pull factors. See the updated theoretical framework (figure 6).

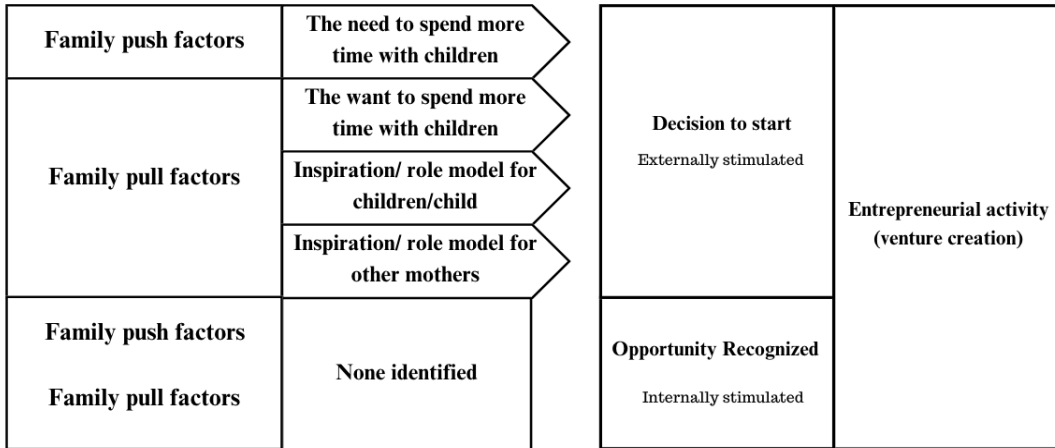


Figure 6. Updated developed theoretical framework

## 6 Conclusions and discussion

*In this chapter, the viable conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the empirical data will be presented and a discussion of the results will be conducted. Furthermore, the theoretical contributions of this essay will be discussed and suggestions for future research will be made.*

### 6.1 Conclusions

The question statement: *Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur? If so, what can characterize them and how can they function?* Is to be answered.

The question statement includes three question sections to be answered:

- Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur?
- What can characterize the motivational factors?
- How can the motivational factors function?

The first section of the question statement: *Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur?*, can be answered by the empirical findings. It can be concluded that motherhood can generate motivational factors that positively affect a mothers' choice to become an entrepreneur. This conclusion can be made since several motivational factors related to motherhood were prominent in the interviewed entrepreneurs' decisions to start a business. In 9/10 of the entrepreneurs' decisions to become entrepreneurs, there was one or more motivational factor related to having children identified as playing a part which justifies the conclusion that there in fact are existing motivational factors.

The second section of the question statement: *What characterizes them?* can be answered with the findings of the extensively conducted thematic analysis. Three aggregated themes were formed and were divided into four different identified motivational factors that can be used to answer what characterizes motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship. It can be concluded that motivational factors can be characterized by wanting to spend more time with children, needing to spend more time with children, wanting to be a role model for children and lastly, wanting to be a role model for mothers. An additional conclusion can be made that the most prominent factor was the want to spend more time with children and that it is therefore a common characteristic.

The third section of the question statement: *How can the motivational factors function?* can be answered by the findings of the secondary analysis on how the motivational factors work as either push or pull and how they are linked to the two different routes of opportunity recognition. In this study, both push and pull factors were identified and the conclusion that the motivational factors can function as both pullers and pushers in making the decision to become an entrepreneur. The majority (three out of four) motivational factors functioned as pull factors, whereas the mother entrepreneurs were more motivated by the opportunity to improve their situation rather than by a need for their situation to change. Only one push factor was apparent and also had a lower prevalence rate than most of the pull factors. Therefore, the conclusion that the motivational factors can more frequently function as a pull can be made. To further explain the function that the motivational factors may have, the route to the opportunity recognition they are analyzed to promote can also be used. The identified motivational factors were all identified

as part of an externally stimulated opportunity recognition route since they were all motivators that made the mother entrepreneurs want or need to become entrepreneurs before actually identifying the opportunity or idea to pursue as a business. Therefore, a conclusion that the motivational factors function as contributors to the externally stimulated opportunity recognition route in greater occurrence than they act as contributors to the internally stimulated opportunity recognition route, can be made.

The question statement can be successfully answered by a summary of the presented conclusions.

*Can motherhood generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur? If so, what can characterize them and how can they function?*

- Motherhood can in fact generate motivational factors that positively affect a mother's choice to become an entrepreneur. They can be characterized by wanting to spend more time with children, needing to spend more time with children, wanting to be a role model/inspiration for children and lastly, wanting to be a role model/inspiration for mothers. They can function as both push and pull factors although more commonly as pull factors, and may to a larger extent be promoters of externally stimulated opportunity recognition than internally stimulated opportunity recognition.

The question statement was successfully answered and therefore, the purpose of this essay has been fulfilled.

## 6.2 Discussion

It has been concluded that motivational factors positively associated with a mother's decision to engage in entrepreneurial activities do exist. With a vast majority of 9/10 displaying motivational factors, the conclusion is viable and grounded in evidence.

It has also been established that motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship can be characterized by 4 different identified traits (Chart 3). The accuracy of the conclusion can

however be discussed. From the empirical findings, four different motivational factors related to children were identified. However, these identifications were formed by the understanding of the interviews that were held within the process of the thematic analysis. The coding, concept formation and aggregated theme summary of the data include several steps where the data is interpreted by the authors which may include a certain level of bias. An alternative understanding of the empirical findings could potentially impact the results. By displaying the entire thematic analysis process, exemplifying the identified components with direct citation and including the transcripts in the appendix, we do however provide a transparency of how the conclusions and findings were made. This increases further the viability of the conclusion and the reader's ability to confirm our interpretation.

Furthermore, it was established that motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship can function as both push or pull factors. This conclusion is grounded in the evident existence of both push and pull factors in the empirical data, analyzed with base in the theoretical framework presented in the literature review. Additionally, the conclusion that motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship more commonly function as pull factors than push factors was made. However, it can be discussed whether this conclusion is viable and applicable internationally. The geographical limitation to Sweden may have impacted the results that grounded the conclusion. It may be argued that solely interviewing mothers located in Sweden may color our conclusions partially due to various factors of the environmental and social context such as the entrepreneurial climate, gender norms and much more affecting the choice to become an entrepreneur. The limitation to Sweden can impact these results immensely in the sense that the institutional context regarding family friendly policies may affect the prevalence of push factors.

As presented in the literature review, less fortunate institutional prerequisites in terms of family policies can result in a *need* to engage in *entrepreneurship as plan B*. This *need* to engage in entrepreneurship in order to care for children is a clear push factor and therefore solely including Swedish entrepreneurs with generous family policies and equal parental leave regulations as the institutional context, may result in a lesser number of and less prevalent push factors identified. Furthermore, Sweden offers equal maternity and paternity leave, meaning that mothers are not expected to stay home with their children during the whole parental leave. This allows female

careers to be less negatively affected than in other countries where the woman has to stay at home for the full parental leave. The lesser negative effects on mothers' careers due to maternity leave may lessen the appearance of push factors. It was found that the most prominent reason for the Swedish mother entrepreneurs to start a business was because they *wanted to* and not because they *needed to*. This may have been different if they didn't have the ability to take maternity leave, stay home with their sick children or receive financial support. Therefore, the conclusion that mothers have less motivational push factors than motivational pull factors in becoming entrepreneurs cannot be proved viable outside institutional contexts with fortunate family policies solely by the findings of this thesis.

Furthermore, the conclusion that the motivational factors function as contributors to the externally stimulated opportunity recognition route in greater occurrence than they act as contributors to the internally stimulated opportunity recognition route was made. It can however be discussed if the conclusion is viable due to the limited type of businesses included in the empirical selection. The majority of the businesses included, were consultancy businesses that did not require much risk or other service companies whereas only one business was more product oriented. The product oriented business was the only business defined as having an internally stimulated opportunity recognition route. Therefore, the conclusion that the motivational factors promote externally stimulated opportunity recognition in greater occurrence than internally may be questioned.

Furthermore, the one business involving an internally stimulated opportunity recognition route, was also the only one where no motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship were detected. However, it can not justify a conclusion of mother entrepreneurs not having motivational factors that promote internal stimulation of opportunity recognition. This since it is hard to differ if it is a viable finding or a result of insufficient variation of the participants. Based on the method, external validity is discussed as a possible problem in the qualitative study due to the limited number of participants. As predicted, this is a prominent issue that has been identified and can be argued to affect the result of this study. In order to confirm that mothers being internally stimulated in opportunity recognition does not correlate with children as a positive motivational factor, more research needs to be conducted.

It is also of importance to mention that the mother identified as internally stimulated was the only entrepreneur that created a business with a high risk level. The externally stimulated mothers all created businesses where they had either low risk level, or low to moderate. However, it can be discussed whether this is a correlation or a coincidence.

Moreover, the term entrepreneurship generally encompasses many different definitions and meanings but is limited to the definition of entrepreneurship as the pursuit of an entrepreneurial career by the founding of ventures, businesses and startups that generate income in this essay. Therefore the answer to the question statement is limited to our specific definition of entrepreneurship rather than entrepreneurship as a universal concept.

### 6.2.1 Contributions to existing research

This thesis contributes to the current theory on mother entrepreneurship by proving that there in fact exist positive motivational factors related to mother entrepreneurship. It also contributes by providing valuable insights on what their characteristics can be, as well as how they can function. The framework that was developed with the use of relevant explanatory theory that was later completed with the findings of the study, may clarify and display the function that the motivational factors can have and further contribute with an in depth understanding of how the factors can act.

Through the executed exploration of an under-researched area, this thesis has fulfilled its purpose by the generation of new insights that may inspire and motivate further research, contribution to the cultivation of a broader and more nuanced perception of the positive relationship between motherhood and entrepreneurship and by its contribution to a more enlightened discussion in the field of mother entrepreneurship.

### 6.2.2 Suggestions for further research

This thesis has limitations that impacted the results and limited the applicability of the research which can be mended and expanded in further research endeavors. The main themes left uncovered by this thesis are the effects on the internally stimulated opportunity recognition route

and the possible push and pull factors promoting it. Due to the unproportional majority of businesses selected being consultancy businesses and other service- businesses, this study leaves a gap in the research in the sense that mother entrepreneurs that have founded more product-oriented businesses have been left unexamined. In comparison to a consultancy company, a product oriented company may possibly in greater occurrence be funded with an internally stimulated opportunity recognition process. In order to truly investigate motherhood as a motivational factor and its function partially by identifying it as a part of the opportunity recognition route, further research needs to be conducted on cases where mothers were internally stimulated in the opportunity recognition process. However, with the vast majority of the selected mother entrepreneurs being externally stimulated, and a majority having consultancy businesses, it may be implied that mother entrepreneurs founded these types of business more commonly. However, the sample is too small to generalize these findings.

Another key aspect in need of further research is the potential push factors that may appear in an international setting rather than in research limited to Sweden. As previously discussed, the institutional context of Sweden regarding family policies may affect the result in ways that Swedish mothers are less in *need* of starting a business than in many other countries that have less fortunate or equal family policies, which leaves room for further detection of push factors in research within a broader or different geographical context.

The summarized suggestion for further research is therefore to improve the selection of data by including a more heterogeneous group, to include entrepreneurs that were internally stimulated to opportunity recognition by varying the type of businesses included as well as expanding the geographical scope.



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# Appendix

## Interview template

Hello! Thank you for helping us with our research and wanting to be interviewed.

First of all we would like to ask you if it is okay if we record the interview so we can transcribe it?

We will start by asking some questions about your background.

- How old were you when you started your business?
- Were you a single parent when you started your business?
- How many children did you have when you started your business?
- How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?
- When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?

Now, we are going to ask you some questions about your business.

- Tell us a little bit about your business
- In what field did you start your business?
- Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?
- What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?

Lastly, we would like to ask you a few questions about motivation.

- What motivated your decision to start a business?
- Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?
  - If you decided/desired to become an entrepreneur first - why do you think that is?
  - If you recognized the idea/solution first?- What do you think inspired it?
- Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?
  - If so, why did you decide to start your business after you had children?
- Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?

## Interview transcriptions

### Interview 1

**How old were you when you started your business?**

23.

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

Yes, I think that was the main reason I started it actually, because I preferred to be a stay at home mom. I really liked having children and spending time with them so I started planning and thinking about how I can do something that can make me be able to stay home with them during the day, and after they've fallen asleep I can go to work.

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

I had two.

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

They were 1,5 and 2,5 years old.

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

No, unemployed.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I was making bridal dresses and that was good because I could do the shewing when the children were asleep or sometimes they were playing and I sat and made those buttons for the dresses and I taught the kids how to do them too. Then I sold that company and I started working as an employee for six years or so and then I realized that I'm not supposed to be an employee, so I quit that job and started a company again. Having children has never set the standard for what I'm doing. Sometimes you have a lot of money and sometimes you don't.

I don't think that having children or not having enough money have been an issue because you will always find a way. If there's a will, there's a way and I think you just need to have the extra little security pocket with you if you start a company with children. I'm trying so hard to make other people aware that children are a part of life and it's a part of living so I have always brought my children. I think it's important to show that it's okay to have your own company and also to have children.

**In what field did you start your business in?**

Bridal dress design.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

Is my full time job.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I think that my risk taking was not that high. I was young but I could do it at home and it did not cost that much to create so I think the risk was quite low.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

The first time I started a business it was because I wanted to spend more time with my children. I had all the bad things about having children, so I wanted to have the good parts as well. That means spending a lot of time with them. I think having children was one of my biggest motivations for starting a business. I could work when they fell asleep so I could hang out with them more.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I think it was a way of finding a solution for the children, thinking “how can I do this?”. I had my parents close so they could take care of my children for some hours during the night and all the evening. So then I started another company teaching different classes for study association. So after half a year or a year or so I had two companies. The primary reason for starting the company has never ever been money, it's always having passion and having fun during work time.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

No, I was quite young. I was 23 when I started the first company and I already had two children.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Yes, because I wanted to own my time and to be able to plan my time as well and also because when you get children as early as I had, people are really keen on telling you how inappropriate it is to be 20 years old and have children. People love to say - well you don't know anything about living or bringing up children”, so I think I was eager to show everyone that it was possible and that I will grow really good adults even if I was just 20 years old. For me it was also important to show my children that it was fun being an adult and that you could do whatever you wanted. My oldest son now have two companies but he started his first company when he was seventeen. I also think that one of my reasons was that it is important to show them that everything is possible and not to say at the breakfast table “well you can be whatever you want”. I think it's important to also show your children that it is possible.

## Interview 2

**How old were you when you started your business?**

36

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

Three

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

When I started the company they were two, five and seven, but I started the project of becoming an entrepreneur when they were little more than one. The last year of my maternity leave I was working with setting the concept and trying to figure it out.

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

I had a job, but my plan has always been to be an entrepreneur even since I was a little girl. I didn't see the opportunity before I was done having children. When I went on my third maternity leave I was sure that I was not going to come back and that I would start my business because after that I knew I was done having children.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I have founded three different companies and I run one. The idea that I came up with, that I saw a gap in the market, was that you either can look good or be safe in traffic. I started to invest in the possibility of production and to produce a product, at the time when my children were two, five and seven. But it took time so at the same time I was starting to work as a consultant with sales and marketing for three years while I was developing my business.

**In what field did you start your business in?**

Marketing consultancy, accessories, coffee marketing

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

It's my full time job but I'm also invested in a piece of property which I'm going to split into nine properties.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I've developed an innovation, it took me three years until I had something to sell, so that was three years with only costs. I had to be a consultant on the side to get money. I took a great amount of risk compared to other entrepreneurs I know.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I think I'm like a musician. For example they can go for a walk on a street and they can feel a smell, they can see something and then suddenly they come up with a text or a sound and it will become a song. It's a passion they have and that's sort of a strength they have. It's the same with entrepreneurship. As long as I can remember it has always been that when I see problems I see possibilities and I see the possibility of starting a business. When I grew up we were talking about businesses and we were talking about the possibility of running our business, what can you do all the time. I never thought at home before I started my business, I have never liked being employed. I like being an entrepreneur because you can sort of take that direction where you want to go where you see the possibilities and so on.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I mean it's not that I was sitting here and thinking I will be an entrepreneur. There are so many possibilities that I saw that I have to be an entrepreneur. As an entrepreneur you see so many possibilities and you just have to choose what you want to do and I usually say that you need to find an idea that attracts both your head, your brain and your heart.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

Yes, I was studying in Jönköping National Business School. At that time they were focusing on entrepreneurship, leadership and small businesses.

**If so, why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

I have never really been interested in running a local smart business. I want to build a brand and a global basis internationally. I want to be an entrepreneur that is known for my knowledge and my experience and that I can sort of inspire other people. It wasn't the right timing. I also wanted to be a mother and I didn't want to be that mother that didn't have the time for my children when they were small so I thought it was better to wait until I had them. Also one thing is that I didn't have any entrepreneurial friends when I started at the university. I didn't really connect with entrepreneurs. I think most of the people wanted to have a good job and I don't know that many from my school that actually decided to start a business and so I didn't have the connection. It wasn't like I could ask a friend.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

No, I wouldn't say it. I mean as long as I can remember I have wanted to be an entrepreneur, and as long as I can remember I have also always wanted to be a mom so it's not like I was thinking about choosing one or another. I wanted both to be a part of my life. I mean I teach my children, I run my company together with my family, my children have spent so many hours in the office



helping me out. I think that it's quite common that you involve your family. You need support and having an understanding partner that accepts what you do and is okay to be involved in what you do. I think that's so important.

### Interview 3

**How old were you when you started your business?**

29

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No, happily married.

**How many children did you have when you started your company?**

One.

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

1,5 years.

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

I was employed working as a project manager.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I'm producing films so it's mostly commercials, only business to business. Sometimes I work as more as a production company so the clients mostly in agencies come to me. Sometimes I also freelance to other companies as a producer and I also do some consulting jobs.

**In what field did you start your business?**

Film production.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

Yes, it's been my full time job since day one.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I was already a film producer and been producing for 10 years. I had a big network so the only thing I needed was a computer and a phone and then I could start to work. Often in film production you use freelancers so I didn't have to hire a lot of people, I could just adjust my budgets and bring the people I needed for different productions. For example, you often rent film equipment, so I never put any risk into it.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

It was actually my kid first of all. The thing is that I lived on the countryside and I just traveled to Stockholm every day for my nine to five job as an employee. I could still work on the train after my maternity leave but then my boss didn't want me to work on the train anymore. Then I realized that it was too big of a personal sacrifice to me barely seeing my kids and so I thought that it wasn't worth it and knew I needed to change my situation. I realized that it was hard to have a nine to five job and have kids. I remember that I asked a few people “how do you make it work with kids and having a career”, and most of them said that you don't really make it work.

I guess the problem with being employed is that you often have a set salary and you have 8 hours working a day, so even if I have nothing to do I still have to be there. Same if I have a lot to do I won't get extra paid. I felt like it was a bad circle, like I can't do much here. I was thinking it over for a day and then suddenly I realized that I could just start my own business and choose where to work, when to work, and how much I wanted to work. Also how much I wanted to get paid for the work I was doing even if it took 5 hours or a week. To me it was something that would solve the kid and career problem.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

Yeah, I would say that it was a big personal problem so the problem came first, then the solution, and then the desire, and then the idea how to do this. All this was during one day.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

I have always been eager to start my own business. I've always dreamt of running my own since as long as I can remember. I always had a feeling that I wanted to have something on my own but it was the big problem with the kid and job that pushed me to take the step.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Yeah 100% I would say. Of course partly, because I think it's easier because I can work sometimes I can work during late evenings or nights and then I can hang out with my kids during the day and take them to swimming lessons. I can just choose for myself. And also I think that it impacted me to show them that it is possible and a good thing. I think it's amazing because I bring my kids sometimes. I was breastfeeding during film shoots with my second one all the time and I think it was important to show others that it's possible to do both. The last thing that I would like to say is that if I wouldn't have kids, I would probably just work myself to death so having kids and running a company is pretty good for your health.

## Interview 4

**How old were you when you started your business?**

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

Two

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

They were 14 and 11.

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

I had employment and my finances were good.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I'm working with the branding strategies and concepts of communication.

**In what field did you start your business?**

It's within marketing and branding but I work with clients from all different branches.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

No, I do not have a part time job but I'm also a board member, that's not within my business though.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I left full employment of course. That's always a risk because you never know how your own business will go, otherwise I don't think there were many risks actually.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I wanted to have more time with my kids. I want to have the possibility to choose whenever and where I want to work in order to enable more quality time together with my family. I was so sick of the assumption that successful business women or entrepreneurs were bad mothers, and that good mothers were bad entrepreneur(s), I wanted to prove them wrong!

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I think it was the idea of being an entrepreneur that was the motivator.

**Why do you think that is?**

Well there are two different things actually. The first one is that if I have the possibility I would had done it sooner than I did but since I'm selling my competence and experience I had to work that up to a certain level before I can be able to do this but I always wanted to be an entrepreneur. It's the same answer as I said before because I wanted to control my life in a better way than I did when I had an employment.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

No.

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

I wanted to control my life in a better way and to spend time with my kids and I think that when they were small it might be good as well, but the older they get the more help they need, you know, in order to help them with school and to pick them up at activities and things like that.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Definitely. Because they are the motivator for me to do this in a big sense actually. Otherwise if it was just safety or risk management, I would still be employed if i didn't have kids because that's so much safer. Another thing that impacted the decision to be an entrepreneur was that I would like to show my kids that it's possible to do whatever you want. I truly wanted to show that it is not a problem to have kids if you want to be an entrepreneur. It's a good thing! I also want to add that since I was employed, I was traveling almost two, three times per week in different countries in Europe and also Asia. I think sadly I lost time with my kids when they were small. We had an extra keeper helping us to pick them up at daycare center etcetera and I really would like to do this in order to give them some kind of a payback.

## Interview 5

**How old were you when you started your business?**

40

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No I was married

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

I had two

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

They were seven and eight

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

It was a bit different because I had been employed for my whole career and the last assignment I had ended up with, was the fact that we came to a conclusion that I should leave the company. Therefore I got the opportunity to receive payment during a couple of months and think about what I wanted to do. During that time I decided to start my own business.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

It is a consultancy business so I basically took all the experience I gained during my career, both as a lawyer and also as a business developer and a managing director, and went out to the market offering my services both from a process perspective business development and project management.

**In what field did you start your business?**

Health field consultancy if that is considered to be a field, within a market of health and health business.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

When I started it was my full time job and the first customer I had was a 50% assignment and gradually, I increased my assignment with that customer. In addition to that, I had smaller customers with less engagement. So I started to build on one major customer and then engaged more and more with that customer.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

That's a very good question. Everything we do is some kind of a risk and I had a very good opportunity since I had a package from my previous employer which lasted a couple of months. With that package and that salary from my previous employer I could actually start the business and I was lucky that I managed to get this customer quite quickly. With that I could gain and put a bucket of money and capital into my business.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I wanted to feel free and I wanted to decide for myself. I was tired of the political arena which you see in bigger companies. I also wanted to have the freedom of deciding my time so I could spend more time with my children and with my family without losing out on all the fun which I see in building a career.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I think given the situation I was in with the package from a previous employer, I had different opportunities. I could either find another employer to go into an employment or I could try the

freeway of growing a career on my own in my own business. The pack or the products it's not that I found a product that I would start to sell because what I saw in my business was my services and that is something that I gained during the career so it was quite easy to sell the services.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

Yes I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur since my father is an entrepreneur and I've seen both the good parts and the bad parts of the entrepreneur. Somehow it triggered me to be able to actually do everything and be independent in that way and not dependent upon another employer. So it has always triggered me, but I didn't want to do it too early in my career because I think that could have been more difficult since it is the services of my experience that they sell.

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

It's based on the fact that I needed more experience before I could start the business.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

I think it didn't really influence me on becoming an entrepreneur but I've had good discussions with the children because they knew me being an entrepreneur. I had much more freedom than in my work days because I could do more with them. For example, if they have a day off from daycare or school I could plan my time to actually be off together with them without losing any vacation days. I also had a very good discussion with my daughter, she was probably eight years old, maybe 8,5. I got an offer of getting or become an employee again and then she said very wisely, "but mom you decided to be an entrepreneur because you wanted more free time, if you accept the offer from that employer you're going to lose that". That really made me reflect upon the fact that yes you're right so I turned it down so I continued to be an entrepreneur.

## Interview 6

**How old were you when you started your business?**

34

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No, I was married.

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

I had three, I was on maternity leave with my youngest.

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

6, 8 and six months.

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

I was on maternity leave with my youngest daughter so I had an employment and I started my business on the side. I worked as a consultant after that.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I have an accounting business so bookkeeping and accounting business. I worked as a consultant with finance matters and financial administration and bookkeeping.

**In what field did you start your business?**

Bookkeeping and accounting.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

This is a full time business.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I was quite cautious and had an office space at home. I started from home because I didn't have money.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I think it was because my boys had special needs so it was to have more time with my boys and being able to decide my working hours. I needed to spend a lot of time going to the daycare center and they needed a lot more support since they had special needs. Then I could work when I decided to work. It was mostly to be more so sufficient to be able to decide more about my working hours.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I was quite scared. I thought “who wants to hire me, who wants what can I deliver to other people”, so I wasn't so confident. It was more about starting my own business and seeing how it goes.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

No

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

I didn't think I could do that before at all, and it never crossed my mind.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Yes! Because I wanted to decide my own hours and to be able to work from home. I could leave and could go and pick my kids up at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon and then I could go back and work in the evening. Also, it was important to be able to spend more time working at home during the summer since I had my kids home from school all summer. That was a big deal in the decision.

## Interview 7

**How old were you when you started your business?**

43

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

I was living with my children's dad.

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

Two

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

3,5 and 11 years old

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

Yes I was employed.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

It's a Gardening company. I do gardening in people's gardens, both private persons, living communities and a couple of companies. I've also worked with previous colleagues that also started gardening companies when they needed help. So I have had both my own customers and worked for my previous colleges as well.

**In what field did you start your business?**

Gardening consultancy.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

It's been my full time job since I started it.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

I didn't think it was such a high risk because I lived with my children's father at the time. Even though he was quite upset because he had just lost his job so he didn't have a regular normal income, he had a lower income. I had some saved money so I knew I could handle the economic



situation. My previous colleagues that decided to start their own business had so much work so I thought “if they can do it, I can do it” so I didn't think it was really a high risk.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

It was because I was so tired of bosses and I wanted to separate from my children's father. The three previous jobs that I had, had been employed and I didn't see an opportunity to move from my children's father. When you're living by yourself with children you have to be flexible. For example if you have your children every second week having to leave them at school or preschool. I didn't think it was possible with my current employment to be a single parent and I wanted to separate from my children's father. I wanted to be more flexible with my time and not work so much and be able to be with my children more, they were pretty young at the time. I thought it was better for me to go down in salary and have less money but be able to spend more time with my children and be there for them more, and to use my time how I wanted it myself.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

The desire to become an entrepreneur came first.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

No

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

I didn't have any plans before I had children.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Definitely because I wanted to spend more time with them and be more flexible with my own time. I decided that I wanted to be able to sometimes just take a day off with them, or half a day off and it wasn't possible when I was employed. I wanted to be there for my children more.

## Interview 8

**How old were you when you started your business?**

39

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No I was married

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

2

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

They were 2,5 and 6,5

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

I was employed.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

Me and my colleague have established a work called international practice and it is very common in English speaking countries. It's about getting people from different generations and areas to do activities together. For example, we had a mission with a preschool and a retirement home located in the same house, scheduling weekly activities. It can be to take walks together or other fun stuff to help people feel better. The internal practice is about getting people that normally don't spend time together to do so in order to expand their social network.

**What business field is your company in?**

Business-development consultancy.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

No, it's my full time job.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

We still can't take out any salary, so right now I'm living on my savings. I quit my full time job and my colleague quit her job as well. That is always a risk and especially for me since I have a house and children I need to support.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I think it is to feel that you're a part of something bigger and to create something, from taking initiative to actually following through with your plan. That is something I missed as an employee, not being able to be a part of the whole process.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

My dad has been an entrepreneur almost my entire childhood so I've always been close to that. And I realized pretty early, after my masters degree that I don't fit in as an employee since I'm very driven and ambitious. I thought that I didn't get paid enough for the responsibilities I had and I don't think that I got enough credit. I wanted to start my own when I was 30 but I didn't dare to take the risk. I wanted to get more experience and knowledge before.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

Yes a couple years before we had children.

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

It was just to find a good enough business idea and to find a partner. I realized pretty quickly that I wanted a partner, otherwise it's very lonely. And the partner completes you.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

It is important for me as a parent to be a good role model and to show my kids that you can be what you want. Of course you need a plan and finances, without my savings I couldn't do this. Parenting is about showing your kids that there are many opportunities and that you can follow through with stuff but you need to work hard. This is the motivator in my parenting. I don't want to spoil my children, they need to know that they have to work hard.

## Interview 9

**How old were you when you started your business?**

37

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No I was not.

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

Two

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

I started my business 2018 and they are now they are 13 and 15

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

Actually I was employed by one of my biggest customers. At that moment I realized it was very difficult to get the family together and also doing audits full time, so I made my own business that I want to do and to be on my own and then work as a part auditor instead of full-time auditor.

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

I am an auditor on management systems and I do the reviews of the companies. I also have three companies that I'm working on as a consultant.

**What business field is your company in?**

Audit management consultancy.

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

It's my full time job.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

No, actually I don't think I took a lot of risk. Like I mentioned, I did one of my biggest clients at the start. I had the chance and I saw it quite meaningful. I also had good entrepreneurs around me that were there and when I was going to take the big step that's very important.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

I wanted the freedom to be more involved with my children and have more time with my family. But also the money.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I also wanted to be an entrepreneur but maybe I did not have the idea and so the first one maybe.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

I think I always have dreams about being an entrepreneur but I did not have the idea or I did not have any clue about what to do. I've always dreamed about this.

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

No reason.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

In my case it did not have an impact because I have a great support around me, even if my family did not like it.

## Interview 10

**How old were you when you started your business?**

36

**Were you a single parent when you started your business?**

No I was not (during my first business) But when I started the last one, I was.

**How many children did you have when you started your business?**

Two

**How old were your children (or child) when you started your business?**

They were 6 and 2 years old

**When you created your business- how was your current life situation in terms of employment?**

Yes, I had a full time job at the time

**Tell us a little bit about your business?**

The company was a franchise. It was a senior business. We rented out retired people to people and businesses.

**What business field is your company in?**

Staff and recruitment services and Competence development

**Is your business your full time job or do you have an additional part time job?**

It is my full time job.

**What did your risk taking look like when you started your business?**

Of course it's always a risk to start a company and I don't think I was aware of the risk the first time around. I didn't expect six months until I could take out a salary and so on. I didn't have to invest in any expensive equipment and had an office at home already but still, accounting services and marketing costs a little too! So it was still some risk with handling the cost without an income and before the money rolled in.

**What motivated your decision to start a business?**

It was to be able to own my own time, even if it meant that I work more. And the trill!. And that things happen fast, now you make sure that it happens, that is a great motivational factor. You can surround yourself among nice people you pick yourself. Gender-factors at work, if you're a strong woman making progress, the men love to comment on it. Stuff like "you can't take care of your children", I heard that a couple of times when I worked there. I would rather be with my children than to be there. Even the children were happy that I would quit my job. I was canoeing with my kids but as soon as my work called, I had to row into shore. I always had to answer to someone else as an employee.

**Did the decision to become an entrepreneur/start your business come first or did the idea/solution come first?**

I think it is a combination of them both.

**Did you have plans on starting a business before you had children?**

No I did not.

**Why did you decide to start your business after you had children?**

I didn't think about it before.

**Do you think having children impacted your decision to become an entrepreneur, if so, how?**

Yes I would like to think that. You often get caught between daycare and work. Sometimes daycare wanted vacations during certain times that the company couldn't do. There isn't much flexibility in these situations, at least not in my previous jobs. I'm sure there are some companies that offer it, but I can understand the ease of it when I had my child. Even though it may sound strange, but it was easier to complete the family life puzzle as an entrepreneur and be around more for my children.