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# **The Influence of Entrepreneurial Identity and Maternal Identity Centrality on Creative Opportunity Search Strategies and Action Likelihood: Case of Mumpreneurs in Turkey**



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## **ABSTRACT**

*Based on existing theoretical and empirical studies, this paper's purpose is to examine the agents relevant to the process of mumpreneurs' creative search and action likelihood toward new opportunities with an emphasis on two main identities: maternal and entrepreneurial as experienced by mumpreneurs in Turkey. The study examines the significance of both entrepreneurial and maternal identities on the use of creative strategies while searching for potential new opportunities and action likelihood toward these opportunities. Data for the study was collected using survey methodology on mumpreneurs in major urban cities of Turkey. The structural model measures entrepreneurial identity and maternal identity centrality, creative search strategies and action likelihood using a sample of 302 mumpreneurs: 169 part-time and 133 full-time mumpreneurs. Study findings reveal that between the two identities, entrepreneurial identity has a stronger positive effect on the use of creative strategies and action likelihood while maternal identity had a positive but quite low impact on the same variables. The use of*

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*creative strategies had a significantly positive and high impact on action likelihood. 'Years of experience' control variable has been found to have a significant negative influence on creative opportunity search strategies and action likelihood. This study helps us understand how motherhood's powerful emotions and attachment to identities, which are highly central to the self, affect the entrepreneurial decision-making process.*

**KEYWORDS:** *mumpreneurs, identity, creative opportunity search strategies, action likelihood*

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a key driver of economic growth and progress. Among women entrepreneurs, the category of "mumpreneurs" has garnered significant attention due to the unique challenges they face in balancing family responsibilities and entrepreneurial pursuits (Duberley & Carrigan, 2013). Thus, this paper aims to explore the interplay between individual and contextual factors in mumpreneurship, such as entrepreneurial and maternal identities, creative opportunity search strategies (hereinafter referred to as *creative search*) (Heinonen et al., 2011; Puhakka, 2007), and the likelihood of acting upon them (Dimov, 2007; 2020), (hereinafter referred to as *action likelihood*).

While research on the intersection of motherhood and entrepreneurship is growing, three significant gaps persist:

- (1) *Gender-Centric Focus vs. Maternal Roles*: Many studies focus on gender issues in mumpreneurship, overlooking the fundamental maternal roles mumpreneurs fulfill. The 5M framework (Brush et al., 2009) highlights the transformative nature of mumpreneurial activities but does not fully address maternal role obligations (Breen & Leung, 2020).
- (2) *'Doing' vs. 'Being' a Mumpreneur*: Research often emphasizes the actions mumpreneurs take in managing childcare and business operations, neglecting the aspect as 'being' a mumpreneur, not just 'doing' part of mumpreneurship (d'Andria et al., 2020).
- (3) *Intentions vs. Actions*: While entrepreneurship literature often focuses on factors influencing the intention to start a business, less attention is paid to acting upon creative ideas or opportunities. Shifting the focus to intentionality regarding creative opportunities is essential (Dimov, 2007; 2020).

This research aims to address these gaps by quantitatively analyzing data from 302 mumpreneurs in Turkey, with the goal of advancing both mumpreneurship and women's entrepreneurship in developing countries.

## **Theoretical Development**

### **Identity and Action Likelihood**

#### *Mumpreneurs' Entrepreneurial Identity within the Context of Entrepreneurial Intentionality*

According to the identity theory, identity represents a set of meanings or standards which individuals ascribe to themselves in relation to social categories occupied (e.g. women, male), affiliated social groups (e.g. family, soccer team supporters), acting roles (e.g. student, mother), and the qualities that make them unique from others on a personal level (e.g. humorous, hardworking, trustworthy) (Burke, 2009). Burke (2009) explains how identity is composed of *identity standard*, which holds sets of meanings related to the identity, and an *individual's perception of the identity-related meanings* in a specific situation, often coming from others' feedback and self-evaluation in a role. However, literature has underlined how mumpreneurs often face difficulties while maintaining their entrepreneurial identities due to how these identities interact with their already committed roles and continuous childcare responsibilities. Landour (2020) underlines how mumpreneurs who develop efficient strategies to balance work and personal life develop an entrepreneurial mindset quickly. Moreover, Elvin-Nowak et al. (2001) propose that mumpreneurs may develop their own tactics and ways of thinking to assist them in managing family-work demands and construct an identity that best expresses their commitment to both work and mothering obligations. Lewis et al. (2021) highlight the fact that, in addition to their maternal identities, mumpreneurs will build entrepreneurial identities faster once they start developing a business. The authors performed their research on mumpreneurs with a focus on the adaptation of their feminine entrepreneurial identities while operating in a masculine entrepreneurial environment. The study stressed a critical finding: mumpreneurs, who maintain a balanced feminine entrepreneurial identity, avoiding extremely feminine characteristics, are more likely to grow their business opportunities. In a similar vein, Drakpa et al. (2022) found how, in addition to financial resources, women entrepreneurs who have confidence

in their abilities and business knowledge are more likely to take part in start-up activities. It is, thus, reasonable to conclude that when someone is confident in their skills and abilities to succeed in a particular job, it frequently shapes how they see themselves within that role, which has a significant impact on their work identity formation. After all, self-confidence is defined as being unafraid to understand and act on your thoughts. Although it has been proven how efficiently entrepreneurial identity assists in finding potential opportunities and helps organize resources (Navis & Glynn, 2011), it is still unclear whether mumpreneurs' entrepreneurial identity has a direct impact on intention to act upon potential new opportunities or action likelihood. Dimov (2007) introduced the concept of action likelihood, suggesting that the realization of planned entrepreneurial behavior is influenced by various factors such as the entrepreneur's environment, prior experience, and individual traits. He recommends focusing on individuals' actions on specific opportunities rather than on their general intention to start a business. Therefore, among the factors influencing the intention to act is entrepreneurial identity, as it motivates behavior to satisfy the need for competence (Burke and Stets, 1999). Consequently, mumpreneurs might seek validation beyond their roles as mothers by fully dedicating themselves to their goals. This essentially means that effective mothering entails actively caring for children while also acting as their primary financial provider (Ekinsmyth, 2013), mirroring their entrepreneurial identity. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that:

**H1:** Mumpreneurs' entrepreneurial identity has a significant and direct impact on their likelihood of acting toward identifying and exploiting new opportunities in the near future

### *Mumpreneurs' Maternal Identity Centrality within the Context of Entrepreneurial Intentionality*

According to Barnett and Baruch (1987), maternal identity refers to a woman's perception of herself as a mother and the importance she places on this role in her life. Arendell (2000) underlines how maternal identity is not a one-size-fits-all experience and how each mother's journey is distinct. Yet, even though not all mothers develop maternal identity, within the broader context, the process of forming maternal identity is thought to begin during pregnancy. Rubin (1967) emphasizes this notion, illustrating how mothers initiate the construction of their identity through imitation, role-playing, and observing role models. Despite this multidimensional nature of maternal

identity, entrepreneurship is often seen as beneficial for mothers. Although mumpreneurs' ability to pursue both entrepreneurship opportunities and embrace maternal identity has its challenges, it allows them to make independent decisions, establish a work-life balance, and engage in maternal responsibilities according to their own preferences (Kogu & Mejri, 2022; Tan & Yew, 2023). According to Landour's (2020) research, pursuing entrepreneurship is fundamentally an identity issue. Specifically, the author defines the "identity issue" as a person's search for self-actualization within a specific identity domain. From the mumpreneurial perspective, this suggests that mumpreneurs who want to benefit from their business activities are more inclined to build an identity as a means for self-actualization while gaining community credibility as an entrepreneur and a mother. This has been confirmed by Rodrigues et al. (2022), who state and we quote "*Mumpreneurship is considered a form of female entrepreneurship whose motivation, and the process of identifying opportunities, is influenced by maternity.*" (p. 3429). Within these lines, we strongly believe that as mumpreneurs intentionally structure ventures around their families, the presence of an identity highly central to self-concept will increase the likelihood of action toward a particular idea (Ekinsmyth, 2013). Therefore, it has been hypothesized that:

**H2:** Mumpreneurs' maternal identity centrality has a significant and direct impact on their action likelihood toward identifying and exploiting new opportunities in the near future.

## **Identity and Creative Search**

### *Mumpreneurs' Entrepreneurial Identity within the Creative Search*

Entrepreneurial identity is success-driven; it drives passion toward implementing entrepreneurial targets by creatively scanning for opportunities, resulting in enhanced engagement in target tasks (Cardon et al., 2009). In reality, creativity may present itself in a variety of different ways, especially in the mumpreneurial sphere. In spite of the fact that mothers may have strong creative self-concepts in both the professional and personal domains, mumpreneurs' self-concept in a role and creative search for new opportunities have received relatively little attention from the field of identity research (Marsh et al., 2006). A few studies examined these components from a family and gender perspective. For example, Lebuda and Csikszentmihalyi (2020) emphasize how a family appreciation of an

idea enhances motivation for creativity, raises self-efficacy for creativity, and leads directly to creative behavior. Kimmelmeier and Walton (2016) observed how women outperformed male colleagues in the originality of their creative work in their study on gender gaps in the self-assessment of creativity. Authors also emphasize how creative women may not always develop something for their own gain; they may also do it to benefit and please those to whom they are emotionally committed. By interacting with the environment to collect important information, a mumpreneur might develop an interest in executing the role based on remarks about the feasibility of the business idea (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Positive belief in an idea implies a satisfactory condition of its feasibility, which will fuel mother entrepreneur's feeling of self-awareness as an entrepreneur and thus actively give meaning to their identity as an entrepreneur (Murnieks et al., 2014). Fundamentally, it is argued that mumpreneurs' entrepreneurial identities will boost their engagement in creative and innovative idea generation to firstly improve the quality of life and eventually fulfill maternal obligations (the basic need of 'good mothering'). If the process of acquiring a creative idea concludes successfully, it would ultimately validate entrepreneurial identity on a micro-level. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that:

**H3:** Mumpreneurs' entrepreneurial identity will have a significant and direct influence on creative search.

#### *Maternal Identity Centrality within the Creative Search*

Along with their constant engagement in entrepreneurial activity, mumpreneurs continue to perform behaviors attached to the mother role. In their study, Kwasniewska and Lebeda (2017) highlight the favorable effects of motherhood on a variety of characteristics and skills related to creativity. In a similar vein, IlhaVillanova, Luisa, and Cunha (2021) stress how creativity and a creative search for new ideas are typically required for mothers' day-to-day activities, interpersonal interactions, managing everyday responsibilities, and overcoming unforeseen obstacles. Ekinsmyth (2013) notes that when we think about mumpreneurs' daily schedules it is simple to understand how both caring for one's family and running a business may be a source of creative new ideas. Moreover, facing and overcoming sociocultural, occupational, and private barriers usually involves creative ways of thinking and organizing (Brush et al., 2009; Ekinsmyth, 2011; Lewis, 2014; Lewis et al., 2021). For example, Sonbol (2018), in her extensive examination of creative responses to gendered

opportunities, underlines how, women's absorption of "motherhood", rather than the notion of motherhood, is what gives them the potential to engage in entrepreneurship in creative and productive ways. By following the notion unrolled in these studies, understanding how mumpreneurs use their creativity to help construct and validate their maternal identities, as well as how creative search strategies help to navigate the seemingly difficult maternal and professional obligations, can help put mumpreneurs on the entrepreneurial agenda and improve our understanding of mumpreneurial creativity. Given these findings, the current study implies that when a mumpreneur's maternal identity is central to her ideal self, identity verification becomes more important and vital since it entails deep sentiments of family ties as fundamental role values. As a result, she will seriously consider pursuing a search for creative opportunities in order to meet a basic family requirement. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that:

**H4:** Mumpreneurs' maternal identity centrality will have a significant and direct impact on creative search.

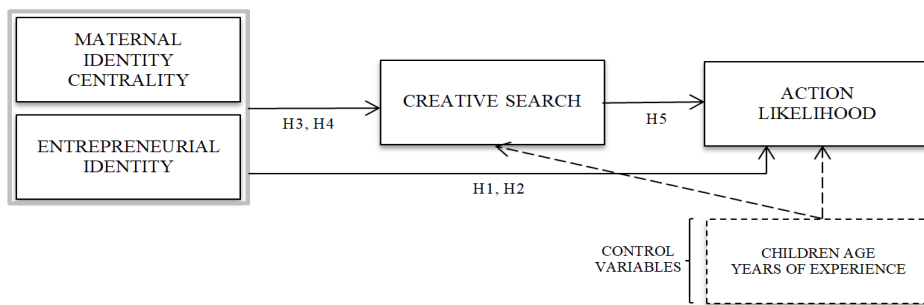
#### *Creative Search and Action Likelihood*

According to several studies, the key to successfully identifying and exploiting new opportunities—while also satisfying the need for a positive self-perception in a role—is creative search. Creative search is a kind of concept that is only focused on and concerned with the future (Pandza & Thorpe, 2009). Each mother begins the business with a more or less distinct vision of the company's future within the boundaries of sociocultural norms, professional ability, and private lifestyle. In order to find and shape viable future ideas, mumpreneurs collect relevant data in a systematic manner as they reconstruct and redefine the ideal of motherhood within entrepreneurship. Brush (1992) emphasized how creative ideas or opportunities do not always come by chance but are believed to be embedded within the roles mumpreneurs identify with. Indeed, the answer to the question of why some individuals recognize the opportunity while others do not lies in the mumpreneurs' image of themselves (Lewis et al., 2021), the identity they have embedded, and the future image of the opportunities they hold. Therefore, at the stage of the search, information processing enables a mumpreneur to establish a more accurate view of the desired self in her role as both mother and entrepreneur (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), as well as the view she holds about future market-based opportunities. Given the aforementioned, mumpreneurs will actively look

for possibilities that suit their future image of "good mothering," in which the primary objective is to provide a better future for their children and family. Hence, it is predicted that mumpreneurs' creative search will strengthen their intentionality toward action upon viable future opportunities. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that:

**H5:** Creative search will have a significant and direct effect on mumpreneurs' action likelihood.

*Figure 1: Theoretical Model and Hypotheses*



*Source: Authors' own model*

## Methodology

### Sample and Procedure

The goal of this study was to gather data from established mumpreneurs currently running businesses; however, identifying eligible mumpreneurs was quite challenging. Associations having up to 500 members each agreed to participate in our study. Despite having up to 500 members each, members of the associations were not all mothers, and not all were reachable during our data collection period. We managed to collect only 40 questionnaires. Consequently, we shifted our focus to collecting questionnaires from mumpreneurs not affiliated with any association. We reached out randomly to mumpreneurs engaged in local family businesses, including artists, chefs, and small-scale workshop owners, both part-time and full-time. Data gathering began within our own network and expanded to business networks of mumpreneurs willing to help. After deleting incomplete or inconsistent responses, we obtained 302 completed questionnaires out of the initial 347, achieving an 87% response rate. To



ensure consistency, the questionnaire was translated into Turkish by one translator and then into English by another. Any discrepancies were resolved jointly.

*Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
<b>Age</b>			<b>Children activity</b>		
18-25	14	4.6	Yes	138	45.7
26-30	31	10.3	No	161	53.3
31-40	80	26.5	Not born yet	3	1
41-50	111	36.8	<b>Income</b>		
>50	66	21.9	5.001 – 10.000 TL	134	44.3
<b>Education</b>			< 10.001 TL	168	55.6
Primary or Middle School	23	7.6	<b>House rent</b>		
High school	141	46.7	Yes	122	40.4
University	122	40.4	No	180	59.6
Grad school / PhD	16	5.3	<b>Type of entrepreneur</b>		
<b>Marital Status</b>			Full-time Entrepreneur	133	44
Married	248	82.1	Part-time Entrepreneur	169	56
Divorced	37	12.3	<b>Entrepreneurial activity</b>		
Widowed	17	5.6	1 to 10 years	174	57.6
<b>Children</b>			> 10 years of activity	128	42.4
1	102	33.8	<b>Sector</b>		
2	147	48.7	Production	88	29.1
3	43	14.2	Accounting - Finance	11	3.6
>3	7	2.3	Human Resources	5	1.7
Pregnant	3	1	Sale - Marketing	140	46.4
<b>Children Age</b>				4	
All children are under 1 year of age	7	2.3	Other	46	15.2
All children are 1-5 years of age	44	14.6	<b>Answers under 'Other':</b>		
All children are 6-10 years of age	37	12.3	Health, Textile, Informatics,		
All children are older than 10 years of age	147	48.7	Education, Hairdresser, Beauty salon, Tourism, Media, Grocery store, Medical export, Leather accessories design, Fashion design,		
Not born yet	3	1.0	Translation, Language courses		
Children aged < 1 and 1-5 years of age	15	5.0	school, Eyebrow design, Waxing salon, Cleaning company, Yoga		

Characteristics	N	(%)	Characteristics	N	(%)
Children aged < 1 and 6-10 years of age	3	1.0	course, Trade, Tailor, Interior design, Farmer, Stationery owner, Animation and NFT		
Children's age is 1-5 and 6-10	15	5.0			
Children's age is 1 and > 10 years of age	1	0.3			
Children's age is 6-10 and > 10	30	9.9			

Source: Authors' own calculation based on survey data

Dependent, Independent and Control Variables

In order to ensure that there is no systematic bias influencing our primary data, Harman's (1976) one-factor test was done (Podsakoff et al., 2003). After calculating Harman's test in SPSS by choosing the principle axis factoring method and a fixed number of factors 1, the results showed the presence of only one factor, which on its own accounts for less than 50% of the variance (37,36%).

Table 2: Explanatory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Reflective Constructs		EFA	CFA
<b>Factor 1: Entrepreneurial Identity</b>			
EIA_1	I often thought about becoming an entrepreneur.	0,830	0,690
EIA_2	I see myself as an entrepreneur.	0,752	0,900
EIA_3	Becoming an entrepreneur is an important part of who I am.	0,771	0,759
EIA_4	When I think about it, the term "entrepreneur" fits me pretty well.	0,783	0,776
EIA_5	I always thought about becoming an entrepreneur.	0,744	0,694
EIA_6	It is important for me to express my entrepreneurial ambition.	0,796	0,761
<i>Cron.α 0.874; rho_A 0.881; CR 0.874; AVE 0.583</i>			
<b>Factor 2: Maternal Identity Centrality</b>			
MIC_1	I think about the fact that I am a mother, when I'm deciding on possible business opportunities	0,839	0,923
MIC_2	The fact that I am mother is an important part of my entrepreneurial role.	0,847	0,762
MIC_3	Being a mother is an important part of how I see myself at my job	0,883	0,757

<b>Reflective Constructs</b>		<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>
<i>Cron.α 0.857; rho_A 0.867; CR 0.857; AVE 0.668</i>			
<b>Factor 3: Creative Search</b>			
SO_1	I am trying to find a really new business idea	0,871	0,831
SO_2	I purposefully emphasize creativity when generating the business idea	0,869	0,756
SO_3	I intend to find original and really novel ideas for a business	0,748	0,959
<i>Cron.α 0.888; rho_A 0.901; CR 0.888; AVE 0.727</i>			
<b>Factor 4: Action Likelihood</b>			
AL_1	Engage in a deliberate, systematic search for an idea for a new business opportunity.	0,781	0,916
AL_2	Think about a business idea or a number of business ideas that can potentially grow into a real business.	0,785	0,888
AL_3	Discuss ideas for a new opportunity with my friends and family.	0,664	0,713
AL_4	Talk about a new opportunity with people that I have a business or working relationship with.	0,816	0,681
AL_6	Take some classes or seminars on how to exploit a new opportunity.	0,590	0,771
AL_7	Alone or with others, define products or services for the new business idea.	0,826	0,805
AL_8	Alone or with others, try to define the market opportunity for the business.	0,816	0,805
AL_9	Devote significant time to this business idea.	0,822	0,854
AL_10	Alone or with others, study and map out the financials for the opportunity.	0,848	0,864
<i>Cron.α 0.945; rho_A 0.950; CR 0.946; AVE 0.663</i>			

*Source: Authors' own calculations based on survey data*

As shown in Table 2 all scale items were operationalized on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree". In order to fit our study, the wording of the items was changed by adding the words 'entrepreneur' and 'opportunities'. The effect of Children's Age variables and Years of Experience on AL and OS was controlled, as they may be significant influential factors in the decision to engage in any entrepreneurial activity.

## Findings

### Evaluation of the Outer Measurement model

First, exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 22.0 was conducted to check for internal reliability and determine the factor structure of the latent variables. The AL scale containing 16 items was divided into more than one factor; AL\_1 to AL\_10 were loaded on the main AL factor, whereas AL\_11 to AL\_16 were loaded on another factor, which gave us a general picture of the factor's dimensional structure.

*Table 3: Correlation Values and Discriminant Validity*

		EI	MIC	OS	AL
<b>Fornell-Larcker Criteria</b>	Entrepreneurial Identity	<b>0.767</b>			
	Maternal Identity	0.066*	<b>0.817</b>		
	Centrality				
	Creative Search	0.476*	0.279*	<b>0.853</b>	
	Action Likelihood	0.470*	0.422*	0.567*	<b>0.814</b>
<b>Heterotrait-Monotrait Values</b>	Entrepreneurial Identity				
	Maternal Identity	0.080			
	Centrality				
	Creative Search	0.476	0.270		
	Action Likelihood	0.468	0.420	0.563	

*Note: Values written in bold are  $\sqrt{AVE}$ ; Correlation values are presented in the Fornell-Larcker Criteria table. \* $p < 0.001$ .*

*Source: Authors' own calculations*

Thus, we have eliminated items AL\_12 to AL\_16 accordingly. Further analysis suggested that the scales of MIC, EI, and OS are all one-dimensional scales. In addition, results of the analyses including Varimax-rotation with Kaiser Normalization show KMO 0.897, Bartlett's  $p < 0.001$ , cut-off point 0.50, Cronbach's Alpha 0.925, and factor loadings higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014). The scale matches the literature's generally accepted reliability of Cronbach's Alpha 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). After additionally dropping item four of the creative search, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the 21 items indicates a four-factor model. As our study uses a reflective measurement model, SmartPLS 4 software was used for the reliability and validity testing of the constructs. CFA results indicate internal

consistency as all composite reliability (CR) values are above 0.7. Convergent reliability was achieved as well, as all average variance extracted (AVE) values are above the cut-off value of 0.5. The rho\_A reliability coefficient values are all above 0.7, which is in line with the suggestions of Hair et al. (2014). Thus, discriminant validity was achieved by the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion, which suggests that the square root of each AVE should be higher than the correlation coefficients for each latent variable. Furthermore, the HTMT criterion for discriminant validity between reflective constructs shows a value below 0.90, as suggested by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). PLS-SEM results suggested a good fit of the model (SRMR = 0.057, NFI = 0.804) according to the criteria for model fit advised by Hair et al. (2014). As SmartPLS does not provide a standard goodness-of-fit statistic aside from the NFI and SRMR values mentioned above, the model fit in CFA was additionally calculated using the GoF value ( $\sqrt{\text{averageAVE} \times \text{averageR}^2}$ ) as suggested by Cohen (1988). The GoF value of 0.579, obtained by calculating the formula, exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of  $R^2$ . This value indicates that the model has very good prediction power.

### **Evaluation of the Inner Structural Model**

To establish the significance of the path coefficients, the current study used a bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap approach using 5000 bootstrap samples with 300 maximum iterations. In addition to the explanatory power of  $R^2$ , the  $f^2$  value represents the magnitude of each independent variable's influence on the dependent variable. When an independent variable is removed from the path model, a change in the value of  $R^2$  indicates that the independent variable has an impact on the dependent variable. Geisser (1974), Stone (1974), and Hair et al. (2014) state that  $f^2$  values of 0.35 show a high, 0.15 medium, and 0.02 weak influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. As shown in Table 4, the effect sizes for MIC and EI on OS are 0.086 and 0.294, whereas the effect sizes for MIC, EI, and OS on AL are 0.158, 0.116, and 0.157, respectively. Hence, as Cohen (1988) indicated, the  $f^2$  of all three exogenous latent constructs on OS and AL has a small and moderate effect on the value of  $R^2$ .

Table 4: Results of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Structural relations	f <sup>2</sup>	VIF	(β)	t-value	Path Decision
H1	EI → AL	0.116	1.300	0.309*	4.981	Significant
H2	MIC → AL	0.158	1.091	0.275*	4.552	Significant
H3	EI → OS	0.294	1.004	0.475*	7.999	Significant
H4	MIC → OS	0.086	1.004	0.181*	2.937	Significant
H5	OS → AL	0.157	1.404	0.317*	4.737	Significant
				R <sup>2</sup> adjusted		
				OS	0.31	
				AL	0.46	

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' own calculations

Table 5: Results of the Structural Model (cont.)

Structural relations	f <sup>2</sup>	VIF	(β)	t-value	Path Decision
Children Age → AL	0.001	1.018	0.017	0.382	Not Significant
Children Age → OS	0.000	1.018	0.003	0.066	Not Significant
Years of Experience → AL	0.021	1.188	-0.234*	2.309	Significant
Years of Experience → OS	0.052	1.129	-0.404*	3.555	Significant

Note: \* $p < 0.05$

Source: Authors' own calculations

According to path analysis findings, both entrepreneurial identity and maternal identity centrality variables are significantly and positively correlated to creative search ( $\beta = 0.446^*$ ,  $\beta = 0.292^*$ , respectively), confirming hypotheses H3 and H4. Thus, both entrepreneurial identity and maternal identity centrality variables are significantly and positively correlated with action likelihood ( $\beta = 0.233^*$ ,  $\beta = 0.324^*$ , respectively), confirming both hypotheses H1 and H2. Creative search also has a significant impact on action likelihood ( $\beta = 0.375^*$ ), so H5 is supported. Analysis for control and dependent variables indicated no effect of the children's age variable but showed a negative effect of years of experience on action likelihood and creative search.

## **Discussion and Theoretical Contribution**

A current study finds that the entrepreneurial identity of mumpreneurs significantly influences their creative search for new ideas and the likelihood of acting upon new opportunities. These findings align with prior studies by Landour (2020) and Lewis et al. (2021), emphasizing the importance of mumpreneurs' adaptability to the dynamic entrepreneurial environment and the development of an identity that reflects their commitment to work responsibilities. These results can be explained by the notion of situatedness put out by Dimov (2007), which holds that each person's intentionality is shaped by the particular situation in which it takes place. For Turkish mumpreneurs, the socio-cultural and economic environment in which they operate is expected to have a significant influence on their entrepreneurial activities and identity formation. Unlike developed economies like the UK or US, where socio-cultural norms are more individualistic, Turkey has a more family-oriented and collectivistic culture. In Turkish society, the family is the focal point of business and entrepreneurship, and mothers frequently transition from unpaid household responsibilities or corporate positions to self-employment to provide for their families (Ufuk & Özgen, 2001). However, the business culture in Turkey can create significant obstacles for women aspiring to be entrepreneurs. As a result, women may struggle to build a strong entrepreneurial identity due to self-doubt and lack of confidence. Women often face pressure to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over their careers, making it challenging to balance entrepreneurship with family obligations. This struggle can lead to feelings of guilt and anxiety among mumpreneurs, impacting their entrepreneurial identity formation. Despite these obstacles, mumpreneurs occupy a unique position that presents opportunities for establishing a strong entrepreneurial identity. In Turkey, many mumpreneurs have access to supportive communities of fellow colleagues who offer mentorship, networking, and emotional support. This support can help them overcome challenges in male-dominated business cultures and foster a sense of identity as a successful mumpreneur. Additionally, mumpreneurs' perspectives as women and mothers may provide valuable insights into their target market's needs and preferences, giving them a competitive edge over their male counterparts. This perspective can contribute to their identity as an innovative and successful mumpreneur, enabling them to navigate challenges and find new opportunities effectively. Through the concept of situatedness regarding

creative search and its highly positive relationship with mumpreneurs' entrepreneurial identity the nature of the Turkish economy can be explained. As previously mentioned, Turkey is a rapidly developing country with a growing women entrepreneurship and increasing demand for goods and services. This creates a dynamic and fast-changing business environment, where mumpreneurs have an advantage in identifying new opportunities. Turkey, benefiting from its strategic location and access to 1 billion consumers, stands out as one of the region's fastest-growing economies. Statistical figures show a notable increase in GDP per capita, rising from \$9,539 in 2021 to \$13,110 in 2023 (TÜİK, 2024), accompanied by an average annual GDP growth rate of 5.4 percent between 2003 and 2022 (Presidency of The Republic of Turkey Investment Office, 2024). Despite this growth, recent figures from the 2024 Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) indicate that (*from here on, if not indicated differently, all numbers in thousands*) the number of women entrepreneurs remains four times smaller than those of men in 2023 (women 1.083; men 4.878). Nonetheless, there is a consistent upward trend in the share of women entrepreneurs compared to the overall women employment rate, indicating a steady progress in women's participation in entrepreneurship (2021=10,59%; 2022=10,56%; 2023=10,76%). What's noteworthy is the rise in the number of women entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector between 2021 (185.00) and 2023 (225.00), contrasted with a decline among male counterparts (2021=1.537; 2023=1.469). This trend could be attributed to a significant increase in inflation rates, nearly doubling from 36% to 64% after 2021. This severe economic shift likely impacted the labor mobility of male entrepreneurs, prompting a transition from agriculture to non-agricultural sectors, while women entrepreneurs took over a greater share of agricultural responsibilities. Karadeniz et al. (2023) and Özar (2016) highlight the significance of individuals' perceptions and societal beliefs in shaping entrepreneurial decisions, revealing a disparity where women entrepreneurs remain somewhat disconnected from the operational and strategic aspects of the entrepreneurial sector despite positive economic growth statistics. El Kadhi and Hamrouni (2023) discovered that mumpreneurs follow the philosophy of embracing unexpected surprises. Authors underline that when confronted with unexpected obstacles, they actively seek solutions to overcome them, as these negative events, in particular, help business growth by triggering new ideas on how to solve them. Furthermore, their entrepreneurial identity and mindset may give them the flexibility and creativity needed to adapt to changing market conditions and identify new



opportunities for growth. Furthermore, while present in the findings, mumpreneurs' construction of entrepreneurial identity in a male-dominated structure of business and society remains a mystery. Despite the supportive community of other women entrepreneurs and the unique perspective they have, Turkish mumpreneurs may be unable to develop a strong entrepreneurial identity with a feminine appearance, but a more masculine one. Ultimately, mumpreneurs' success in Turkey will be determined by their ability to handle many challenges that they confront and take advantage of the possibilities accessible to them in masculine settings. The evidence supporting the influence of maternal identity centrality on the creative search for new ideas and mumpreneurs' likelihood of action toward novel opportunities was not as strong as expected. Specifically, while it was assumed that mumpreneurs in Turkey would have strong maternal identification and hence conduct their economic activity primarily on the basis of maternal identity, this was not the case in our study. This can be related to a variety of facts. Firstly, the low influence of maternal identity on both creative search and action likelihood may be attributed to their identity as a mother not being directly related to their entrepreneurial domain. While motherhood may have an effect on their beliefs and objectives, it may not have an impact on their capacity to perceive and act on new possibilities, which is in line with the study by King (2020), who found how women in her study did not demonstrate a strong desire for growth. Secondly, while motherhood may impact a mumpreneur's understanding of market shifts and customer requirements, it may not necessarily provide an edge in spotting new possibilities (Dimov, 2020). Finally, mumpreneurs may have developed techniques to distinguish between their parental and entrepreneurial duties. For example, they may set aside particular periods for work and others for caring for their children. Study results highlighted the significance of the experience period on future action intention as well as on the use of creative search strategies. Interestingly, years of experience had a negative impact on future intention to action, supporting previous studies findings of Hmieleski et al. (2015) and Seletkova et al. (2021). These studies underline the fact that more experienced entrepreneurs shifted their focus beyond mere material comfort, toward fulfilling occupation and professional self-realization facilitated long-term success in entrepreneurship, sustaining and developing businesses effectively. Moreover, the negative impact of years of experience on the use of creative strategy in the search for new opportunities confirms the complexity of the interpretive lens experienced mumpreneurs might have. This process is heavily influenced by the degree

of assistance, obstacles, and motivation that a mumpreneur receives, providing her with encouragement and space to concentrate on growing her business and focusing on sector-specific opportunities (Newhouse, 2018). This might be due to the fact that mumpreneurs have attained a satisfying degree of self-actualization and self-fulfillment, and as a result, they may be less active and ambitious in terms of future action.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study in Turkey focuses on mothers' involvement in entrepreneurship. It finds that Turkish mumpreneurs' creative and innovative thinking is strongly influenced by their self-perceived roles as "good" mothers and "successful" entrepreneurs. Given the close relationship between entrepreneurship and family, families often serve as sources and resources for mumpreneurs' idea development. However, Turkish women still face economic and social dependence on their families and are predominantly viewed as caregivers. This societal norm limits women's career choices and opportunities for further business development. Therefore, recognizing and supporting women who pursue entrepreneurship is crucial for fostering a more inclusive business environment in Turkey and encouraging women to pursue their entrepreneurial goals. In this context, policymakers play a critical role. Although mumpreneurs face challenges such as well-known limited social support and interference from family members (Rodrigues et al., 2022), as well as gender gaps in financial inclusion and low financial literacy (Antonijević et al., 2022), the policymakers can support mumpreneurs by also recognizing the cognitive aspects of their involvement in entrepreneurial endeavors. First, governments might create peer support centers where mumpreneurs can interact to seek guidance and prospective collaborations, establishing a sense of belonging and supporting mumpreneurs' behaviors attached to the role. Second, authorities should encourage mumpreneurs to exercise self-care to maintain their physical, mental, and emotional health while juggling many duties. This might include developing activities that promote self-acceptance and self-esteem, thus improving their positive self-perception as entrepreneurs and mothers. Third, by adopting integrated supporting programs, policymakers may meet both entrepreneurial and maternal requirements. These programs may include specifically developed childcare services customized to mumpreneurs' work schedules and financial aid such

as tax reductions or daycare discounts based on the number and age of their children. Finally, the last and most important role of policymakers is giving much-needed recognition and validation of mumpreneurs' unique contribution to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This can be done by highlighting their success and achievement, as well as the use of their creativity in balancing entrepreneurial and maternal roles on a daily basis.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

Our study has a few limitations: data was obtained concurrently, which may pose a risk to validity, as occurs during cross-sectional survey design with self-reporting data collection. Furthermore, while the focus of this study was on employing measures utilized in prior studies, we recognize that there are additional forms of behavior and identity characteristics that may be important in the decision-making process for entrepreneurs. Finally, the applicability of our findings to a large sample size remains a pending subject matter. Future studies concentrating on the creative search and action likelihood inside the opportunity nexus, in comparable settings as in Turkey, may use these findings as a starting point for better understanding motherhood from cognitive and emotional perspectives.

## **Ethics Statement**

The study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee on March 28, 2022, with the approval number E-43633178-050.02.04-53319.

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