



Navigating Dual Pathways with Hybrid Entrepreneurship in Developing Contexts: A Review of Key Drivers and Gaps in Literature

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: June 28, 2025

Revised: September 22, 2025

Accepted: September 23, 2025

Available Online: September 26, 2025

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship

Hybrid Entrepreneurship

Developing Contexts

Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Hybrid Entrepreneurs

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has received global recognition as a viable strategy for economic development. However, the need to engage in both full-time employment and entrepreneurial activities has given rise to hybrid entrepreneurship. Consequently, this emerging form of entrepreneurship has attracted academic interest. Nevertheless, the specific motives for hybrid entrepreneurship remain significantly underexplored, especially in developing countries. Thus, this literature review examines the key drivers of hybrid entrepreneurship in the context of developing countries. Drawing from peer reviewed literature published across online databases, the review synthesizes relevant literature on hybrid entrepreneurship to identify its key drivers. Key drivers for hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries include self-fulfillment, supplementary income, protecting the security of their profession and risk management. The review also highlights limited research on women hybrid entrepreneurs, comparative studies across countries, industries or professions and a lack of longitudinal studies to highlight trends in hybrid entrepreneurs' motives. The study recommends industry specific research to understand the drivers of hybrid entrepreneurship relevant to specific professions. Furthermore, the study recommends relevant stakeholders including policymakers, governments and employers to design targeted support programs for hybrid entrepreneurs including funding, innovation and intrapreneurship opportunities.



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Citation: Chasaya, W., & Vezi-Magigaba, M. F. (2025). Navigating Dual Pathways with Hybrid Entrepreneurship in Developing Contexts: A Review of Key Drivers and Gaps in Literature. *IRASD Journal of Management*, 7(3), 20-26. <https://doi.org/10.52131/irasd-jom.2025.v7i1.2934>

1. Introduction

High unemployment and a competitive job market have driven entrepreneurship across diverse industries and populations. From recent graduates to the working population, people have ventured into entrepreneurship either as a necessity or as an opportunity. However, most people are often conflicted between leaving their salaried jobs and starting their own businesses, and hybrid entrepreneurship provides a bridge between employment and self-employment (Solesvik, 2017). According to Azizah (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic saw the increase in hybrid entrepreneurs, including women. This suggests that entrepreneurship is an important response to economic uncertainty. However, this may also suggest that most entrepreneurial activities are necessity rather than opportunity driven. Due to business closures and loss of profits, many people were retrenched while others were left insecure of their jobs, pushing many to start businesses. This move can suggest that some

individuals view entrepreneurship as an alternative or supplementary source of income. Nevertheless, Maritz et al. (2023), hybrid entrepreneurship, moonlighting or a side-hustle, constitute a significant proportion of economic and social activities in several countries.

ASANTE (2021) defined hybrid entrepreneurs as individuals who are both employees and entrepreneurs. On a similar notion, Aladejebi (2020) mentions that hybrid entrepreneurship occurs when an individual takes up employment and entrepreneurial activities simultaneously. For this reason, in Nigeria, hybrid entrepreneurship is commonly known as side hustle (Aladejebi, 2020). According to Colbourne et al. (2024), "hybrid entrepreneurship can be seen as a response to both material and immaterial dilemmas that may arise from sustainability paradigm shifts (e.g., related to an unequal distribution of material gains and losses; or disruption of a cultural identity)". This implies that hybrid entrepreneurship can help mitigate socio-economic challenges that arise due to changes in the economic or social environments. This argument is supported by Aladejebi (2020) who argue that hybrid entrepreneurship is a viable option for employees with low job security. In a similar notion, Chakuzira and Shambare (2021) attributed the growth of entrempleeism in Zimbabwe to economic downturn. These perspectives suggest that hybrid entrepreneurship can be an innovative and resilient strategy for socio-economic development especially in poorly performing economies. For Kurczewska et al. (2020), hybrid entrepreneurship enables individuals to enjoy both worlds, "realize his or her entrepreneurial potential while being financially and socially secured by an employer (and with limited personal risks)".

Even though hybrid entrepreneurs contribute significantly to entrepreneurial activity, not much is known about hybrid entrepreneurship (Viljamaa et al., 2017). For this reason, the concept of hybrid entrepreneurship has received considerable attention from scholars (Demir et al., 2022). Almost ten years ago, Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) mentioned that hybrid entrepreneurship was an emerging phenomenon in South Africa owing to inadequate recognition by policymakers. On the other hand, Kapuya (2024) highlight limited understanding on the drivers and barriers of hybrid entrepreneurship. Thus, it is imperative to understand the motives behind hybrid entrepreneurship in the context of developing countries where entrepreneurial activities are most needed. The study objective is therefore as follows:

2. Theoretical Foundations

Kapuya (2024) defined a hybrid entrepreneur as an individual who is both an active employee and employer. This suggests that hybrid entrepreneurs are actively involved with their careers and businesses, they are neither partially involved with one or both. Chakuzira and Shambare (2021) referred to entrempleeism, a form of hybrid entrepreneurship in which a formal employee pursues entrepreneurship based on their employment. What is not clear in entrempleeism is whether formal employees start businesses in their field of employment, or they can start one in a different field. Also, it is not clear whether entrempleeism is necessity or opportunity driven. However, according to Kapuya (2024), in hybrid entrepreneurship, business ventures vary across small start-ups to freelance consultancies. Dvouletý and Bögenhold (2023) classify hybrid entrepreneurs as a sub-group of the self-employed population. Thus, according to Dvouletý and Bögenhold (2023), it can be argued that hybrid entrepreneurs are more of self-employed than formally employed individuals. There are often conflicting views between hybrid entrepreneurship and part-time entrepreneurship (Thomas & Okunbanjo, 2021). Part-time entrepreneurship can be likened to what (Kapuya, 2024) referred to as employee with a side hustle. Kapuya (2024) distinguished between "hybrid entrepreneur" and "employee with a side hustle". "An employee with a side hustle is typically an individual with a primary job as an employee but engages in additional, usually part-time entrepreneurial activities on the side" (Kapuya, 2024). Thus, the major distinction between hybrid entrepreneurs and employees with a side hustle is that the later may not own or operate a business venture (Kapuya, 2024). Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021) added that part-time entrepreneurs do not intend to become full-time entrepreneurs, contrary to hybrid entrepreneurs. This raise concerns on whether on the part of hybrid entrepreneurs it is entrepreneurship or a side hustle, what (Kapuya, 2024) refer to as employee with a side hustle.

3. Methodology for Literature Review

This study is based on secondary information collected across different online databases. Literature published between 2015 and 2025 was synthesized to understand the trends in the motives behind hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries. Literature search was done in databases such as google scholar and only peer reviewed articles were included. Keywords such as hybrid entrepreneurship, hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries, motivations for hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries and drivers for hybrid entrepreneurship were used to search for relevant literature.

4. Motivations for Hybrid Entrepreneurship

4.1. Protecting the Security of their Profession

Research conducted by Azizah (2023) found that while pure women entrepreneurs are motivated to get income and become their own bosses, hybrid women entrepreneurs are motivated to protect the security of their profession and get income. These findings show that both pure and hybrid women entrepreneurs are motivated by income. However, while pure women entrepreneurs value their own independence and freedom, hybrid women entrepreneurs prioritize job security, and they are not ready to give up the stability of employment. This suggests that hybrid women entrepreneurs start businesses to supplement their income or test ideas while. Considering that they prioritize the security of their professions and jobs, their transition to full time entrepreneurship is unclear. However, research conducted by Viljamaa et al. (2017) found that few academic hybrid entrepreneurs contemplate transitioning to full self-employment. On the contrary, Viljamaa et al. (2017) research conclude that hybrid entrepreneurship is an effective learning experience and pathway to full-time entrepreneurship. Even though Viljamaa et al. (2017) findings were drawn from a narrow sample of academics, they reinforce (Azizah, 2023) findings which suggest that hybrid entrepreneurs prioritize their job security.

4.2. Self-fulfillment

Research conducted by Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) established that non-monetary benefits were the major motivation for hybrid entrepreneurship among the surveyed participants. According to the study, non-monetary benefits referred to an individual's desire to pursue their passion or hobby (Dzomonda & Fatoki, 2018). The findings are consistent with Viljamaa et al. (2017) findings which established that self-fulfillment is the main motive for entrepreneurial activities among academics. While Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) study was conducted across different industries, Viljamaa et al. (2017) study was conducted in the academic industry showing consistency among diverse industries. Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) and Viljamaa et al. (2017) findings imply that hybrid entrepreneurs seek personal more than financial goals. The findings challenge the idea that entrepreneurs are profit-driven, while supporting the idea that purpose, passion and personal growth are key motivators for entrepreneurship. However, considering that Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) and Viljamaa et al. (2017) studies were conducted among hybrid entrepreneurs only, it is unclear whether the same findings hold true in the context of pure entrepreneurs. This necessitates comparative studies to determine the differences between hybrid and pure entrepreneurs regarding motives. Additionally, considering that both Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) and Viljamaa et al. (2017) conducted quantitative studies, it is imperative to conduct qualitative studies to draw insights into the deeper personal experiences, motivations, and contextual factors that influence individuals to pursue hybrid entrepreneurship for non-monetary reasons.

4.3. Supplementary Income

A study conducted by Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021) found that hybrid entrepreneurship significantly contributes to poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The study established that although not yet popular in Nigeria, hybrid entrepreneurship is a viable source of additional income (Thomas & Okunbanjo, 2021). Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021) findings corroborate with those of Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) who found that the desire to make extra income is a key motivator for hybrid entrepreneurship in South Africa. Recent research by Kapuya (2024) supports these findings and discovered that hybrid entrepreneurs

in South Africa are motivated by immediate financial needs. The qualitative study established that hybrid entrepreneurs are mainly motivated to venture into entrepreneurship to earn additional income (Kapuya, 2024). These findings imply that hybrid entrepreneurship is a key source of additional income for individuals with low financial security. Furthermore, considering the consistency of findings across Nigeria and South Africa, this suggests that hybrid entrepreneurship is a feasible economic development strategy in developing countries. However, Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018); Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021) and Kapuya (2024) research do not provide insight into the long-term financial sustainability of hybrid entrepreneurship. Thus, there is gap in literature on longitudinal research to explore the sustainability of hybrid entrepreneurship as an additional income source.

4.4. Risk Management

According to Solesvik (2017) findings, hybrid entrepreneurship is a practical low-risk option for individuals pursuing their entrepreneurial passion. These findings are reinforced by a recent study by Maleki et al. (2025) in which hybrid entrepreneurs in Iran were found to prioritize risk reduction and business capability. These findings imply that hybrid entrepreneurs are risk-averse than risk-tolerant. It suggests that hybrid entrepreneurs seek to minimize uncertainty and manage financial, personal and social risk while pursuing their entrepreneurial ambitions. However, Solesvik (2017) argues that “the case evidence here suggests that the two entrepreneurs are not more risk-averse than full-time entrepreneurs but may be more realistic and know the pros and cons of entrepreneurship”. Thus, Solesvik (2017) challenges the view that hybrid entrepreneurs are more risk-averse compared to full-time entrepreneurs and argue that they are fully cognizant of the potential and pitfalls of entrepreneurship. Hybrid entrepreneurs can therefore be viewed as proactive strategic decision makers rather than risk averse. Thus, while Maleki et al. (2025) study associates hybrid entrepreneurs with risk reduction, Solesvik (2017) views their behavior as realism. These conflicting views of hybrid entrepreneurs suggest that a more nuanced understanding of their characteristics and psychological profile is required.

Table 1

Research in Support of the Drivers for Hybrid Entrepreneurship

Motive for hybrid entrepreneurship	Supportive studies
Supplementary income	Aladejebi (2020); Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018); Iram and Bilal (2023); Kapuya (2024); Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021)
Autonomy	Román and Blits (2022)
Self-fulfilment	Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018); Viljamaa et al. (2017)
Risk management	Maleki et al. (2025); Solesvik (2017)
Protecting the security of their profession	Azizah (2023); Viljamaa et al. (2017)

5. Gaps in the Literature and Directions for Future Research

There is a lack of empirical studies specifically on women hybrid entrepreneurs. This is supported by Solesvik (2017) who argue that existing research has not adequately addressed gender issues in hybrid entrepreneurship necessitating the need for research on female hybrid entrepreneurs. For example, Azizah (2023) conducted a comparative study on hybrid and pure women entrepreneurs in Indonesia, and this calls for similar studies in diverse developing contexts. Considering that literature identifies unique social, cultural and economic barriers in women entrepreneurship, filling this gap provides a pathway for gender equity in hybrid entrepreneurship. Understanding hybrid women entrepreneurs’ unique experiences and perceptions can inform more unique policies and support programs.

A key limitation in existing literature is scarcity of comparative studies by country, race or class. While for example Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) research investigated a diverse sample of staff selected from different industries, the findings do not highlight significant differences in staff perceptions across industries. Like Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018) study, Kapuya (2024) sample was drawn across South African industries, but the findings overlooked industry specific insights or variations. As such, based on current literature, the assumption is that hybrid entrepreneurs across different industries and sectors share similar experiences. This assumption overlooks the influence of key countries or industry dynamics such as job

security, income levels, work ethics and culture on hybrid entrepreneurship. Thus, future research should consider exploring variations in the perceptions or motivations for hybrid entrepreneurship across diverse contexts.

Current literature reveals a lack of longitudinal studies to assess the long-term sustainability of the motives behind hybrid entrepreneurship. For instance, Dzomonda and Fatoki (2018); Thomas and Okunbanjo (2021) and Kapuya (2024) consistently identified additional income as a motive behind hybrid entrepreneurship but lack insights into its sustainability. These cross-sectional studies lack insight into the trends that might occur because of career and business developments, changes in personal circumstances and economic conditions. As such, longitudinal studies can provide insight into the long-term viability of the motives behind hybrid entrepreneurship. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal approaches to assess how hybrid entrepreneurs' motivations change over time.

There is a paucity of research on the psychological profile of hybrid entrepreneurs. Without such research, the individual traits, cognitive processes, values and emotional drivers of hybrid entrepreneurs remain underexplored. As such, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the characteristics of hybrid entrepreneurs and full-time entrepreneurs and develop tailored entrepreneurship support programs.

6. Research implications

This study synthesizes literature on the motivations for hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries. Study is a significant addition to literature in this growing area of research, especially in the context of developing countries where research is still developing. Most importantly, the study identifies key gaps in literature and directs future research towards longitudinal and comparative studies, and research on women hybrid entrepreneurs.

The study identifies supplementary income, self-fulfillment, protecting the security of their professions and risk management as key motivations for hybrid entrepreneurship. The study recommends relevant stakeholders including policymakers and the government to design targeted support programs for hybrid entrepreneurs. This includes funding initiatives tailored specifically for hybrid entrepreneurs who may not qualify for full-time entrepreneurship programs but still need capital or business training. This is especially true as most policies and support frameworks are designed for full-time entrepreneurs. Hybrid entrepreneurship should be recognized as a significant strategy for socio-economic development, especially in low job security industries.

Both public and private sector employers should provide support for entrepreneurial activities in their organizations. This includes promoting intrapreneurship and providing opportunities for creativity and innovation in the organization. Even though research is lacking in this area of hybrid entrepreneurship, this study recommends the development of sector-specific interventions for hybrid entrepreneurs. For instance, hybrid entrepreneurs in the technology industry might benefit from easily accessible innovation hubs and access to digital platforms, tools and software.

7. Conclusion

The study examines drivers for hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries. According to the findings, key drivers for hybrid entrepreneurship in developing countries include supplementary income, risk management, self-fulfillment and protecting the security of their professions. However, the study identified critical gaps in literature including a scarcity of longitudinal studies and comparative research across sectors. The study recommends interventions from the government, policymakers and employers. Hybrid entrepreneurship should be recognized as a viable strategy for mitigating socio-economic challenges and sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. Policies and support mechanisms focused specifically on hybrid entrepreneurship should be implemented while employers provide platforms and opportunities for intrapreneurship.

Author Contributions

Wimbayi Chasaya: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Review and Editing.

Makhosazana Faith Vezi-Magigaba: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing, Review and Editing.

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest w.r.t the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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