

On the bright side of motherhood - A mixed method enquiry.

Ma, E., Kim, M. S., Yang, W., Wu, L., & Xu, S. T.



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Pregnancy and motherhood are often stigmatised as negatively impacting women's careers. Yet skills and capacity unlocked/enhanced during this stressful coping process may be transferable to facilitate improved job performance and career advancement in the workplace. Dr Xu and colleagues conducted a systematic synthesis of multi-disciplinary literature and in-depth interviews with working mothers in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The findings of the study suggested that motherhood and the coping process can enhance women's knowledge, skills and capacity, while strengthening women's mindset, willpower, and overall emotional intelligence — all of which are desirable attributes in the workplace. Furthermore, motherhood experiences can unlock women's potential and prepare them for management and leadership positions. Yet to capitalise on this, working mothers need to believe in themselves and also need support from family, organisations, and society at large.

Findings from the current study provides important implications. While motherhood may be perceived by some as career hindering, this research revealed its bright side. Relevantly, formal or informal mentorship or partnership mechanisms can be established among individuals to share this positive messaging and help support those who could otherwise be struggling during the process. Tourism and hospitality organisations could consider offering a “phased return” to help new mothers transfer smoothly. “Check-in days” could be offered to keep new mothers connected during maternity leave. These supports will not only capitalise working mothers' leadership skills and professional success, but also help improve working mothers' well-being and healthy organizational culture.

“If you have raised kids, you can manage anything.” *Crittenden, 2004*



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