



**TURUN
YLIOPISTO**
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

Out of sorrow, entire worlds are built

Caregiving, entrepreneurship and
maternal well-being: An art-based study
in the context of additional needs

Regina Casteleijn-Osorno



**TURUN
YLIOPISTO**
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

OUT OF SORROW, ENTIRE WORLDS ARE BUILT

Caregiving, entrepreneurship and maternal
well-being: an art-based study in the context
of additional needs

Regina Casteleijn-Osorno

University of Turku

Turku School of Economics
Department of Management and Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship
Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics

Supervised by

Professor Ulla Hytti
Turku School of Economics
University of Turku
Turku, Finland

Docent Seppo Poutanen
Turku School of Economics
University of Turku
Turku, Finland

Reviewed by

Professor Helle Neergaard
Aarhus University
Aarhus, Denmark

Professor Jean Clarke
Em Lyon Business School
Lyon, France

Opponent

Professor Helle Neergaard
Aarhus University
Aarhus, Denmark

The originality of this publication has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

Cover Image: children with autumn leaves by Regina Casteleijn-Osorno

ISBN 978-952-02-0572-0 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-952-02-0573-7 (PDF)
ISSN 2343-3159 (Painettu/Print)
ISSN 2343-3167 (Verkkojulkaisu/Online)
Painosalama, Turku, Finland 2026

For my mom, who always leads with her heart...

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Turku School of Economics

Department of Management and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship

REGINA CASTELEIJN-OSORNO: Out of sorrow, entire worlds are built:

Caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being: An art-based study
in the context of additional needs

Doctoral Study, 235 pp.

Doctoral Programme of Turku School of Economics

April 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of entrepreneurship on the well-being, identity, and family dynamics of mothers raising additional needs children. At its core is *caregiving entrepreneurship*, exploring how emotional labour, advocacy, and adaptive capacities transfer into business contexts. Grounded in a feminist ethics of care, role enrichment, and resilience theory, the study conceptualizes caregiving as a generative site of growth rather than an external constraint.

Mothers of additional needs children often develop profound resilience through daily care. This research investigates how these capabilities enable entrepreneurship while negotiating well-being across overlapping roles. Crucially, it identifies a *resilience tax*, a hidden, embodied cost where the persistence required to sustain a venture under structural adversity depletes the founder's well-being. While entrepreneurship offers autonomy, this tax reveals the toll paid by mothers navigating systemic care gaps to maintain legitimacy. Furthermore, the study examines how framing entrepreneurship as an enabling opportunity risks individualizing the responsibility for care and economic security without challenging the broader structural arrangements that position women as primary caregivers.

Using art-based methods, including Lego® Serious Play®, Photovoice, and in-depth interviews, the study uncovers complex emotional dimensions such as maternal joy and defiant resilience. Findings reveal that entrepreneurial activity extends from care competencies, enabling mothers to create social and economic value. By centring the lived experiences of nine mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs, this study challenges deficit-based narratives and economically driven models of entrepreneurship. It reframes success through a care-informed lens, positioning joy and identity formation as transformative dimensions of well-being on the mothers' own terms.

KEYWORDS: motherhood, well-being, resilience, caregiving, entrepreneurship, joy, additional needs, and art-based methods.

TURUN YLIOPISTO

Turun kauppakorkeakoulu

Johtamisen ja yrittäjyyden laitos

Yrittäjyys

REGINA CASTELEIJN-OSORNO: Out of sorrow, entire worlds are built:

Caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being: An art-based study in the context of additional needs

Väitöskirja, 235 s.

Turun kauppakorkeakoulun tohtoriohjelma

Huhtikuu 2026

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee yrittäjyyden vaikutuksia erityislapsia kasvattavien äitien hyvinvointiin, identiteettiin ja perhedynamiikkaan. Keskiössä on *hoivayrittäjyys* (caregiving entrepreneurship), joka tutkii emotionaalisen työn, edunvalvonnan ja vaikuttamistyön sekä sopeutumiskyvyn siirtymistä yrityskontekstiin. Feministiseen hoivaetiikkaan, roolien rikastumisen teoriaan ja resilienssiteoriaan pohjautuen tutkimus käsittelee hoivaa kasvun lähteenä ennemmin kuin ulkoisena rajoitteena.

Erityislasten äidit kehittävät usein syvää resilienssiä hoivatyön kautta. Tutkimus tarkastelee, miten nämä taidot mahdollistavat yrittäjyyden, samalla kun se tarkastelee hyvinvoinnin jatkuvaa neuvottelua. Keskeinen käsite on *resilienssivero* (resilience tax), kehollinen hinta, jossa rakenteellisten vaikeuksien keskellä vaadittu sinnikkyys kuluttaa yrittäjän hyvinvointia. Vaikka yrittäjyys voi tarjota autonomiaa, tämä vero paljastaa seuraukset, joita äidit kohtaavat paikatessaan järjestelmän puutteita ammatillisen uskottavuuden saavuttamiseksi. Lisäksi tutkimus pohtii, miten yrittäjyyden esittäminen mahdollisuutena saattaa yksilöidä vastuun hoivasta ja toimeentulosta sen sijaan, että se haastaisi rakenteita, jotka ylläpitävät naisten ensisijaista hoivavastuuta.

Taideperustaisilla menetelmillä, kuten Lego® Serious Play® ja Photovoice, tutkimus tavoittaa äitiyden ilon ja vastarintaisen resilienssin kokemuksia. Tulokset osoittavat, että yrittäjyys toimii jatkumona hoivaosaamiselle ja mahdollistaa sekä sosiaalisen ja taloudellisen arvon luomisen. Keskittymällä yhdeksän äiti-hoivaaja-yrittäjän kokemuksiin tutkimus haastaa puutekeskeiset kertomukset ja määrittelee menestyksen uudelleen hoivatyön näkökulmasta. Tutkimus asettaa ilon ja identiteetin muotoutumisen hyvinvoinnin keskiöön äitien omilla ehdoilla.

ASIASANAT: äitiys, hyvinvointi, resilienssi, hoiva, yrittäjyys, ilo, erityinen tuen tarve, taidelähtöiset menetelmät.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been a long time coming, but once it started, it was unstoppable. It would not have been possible without the intellectual and personal support of my supervisors, Ulla Hytti and Seppo Poutanen. They each guided with patience and tough love and provided the right kind of questioning that allowed me to discover my own answers. I know I have been blessed with truly empathic supervisors, and for that, I am profoundly grateful.

I owe a great deal of thanks to my opponent, the esteemed Professor Helle Neergaard, whose critical and encouraging guidance was vital to the development of this thesis. To my examiner, Professor Jean Clarke: your kind words and careful consideration were instrumental in bringing this work to its final form. Without the feedback from both of you, it would not be this complete and powerful piece of work. My thanks also go to Professor Natalia Verzhinina and Professor Johan Wiklund; you both intimidated the hell out of me at the start, but proved to be supportive and kind guides along this journey. Dr. Finola Kerrigan, meeting you was a breath of fresh air; your kindness and open nature showed me what academia can be: unpretentious, funny, and no bullshit. I want to be like you when I grow up. Professor Pablo Munoz, you believed in me when I was hardly paying attention and even less likely to believe in myself. I am so grateful to be able to reach out to you, knowing I will always receive an honest answer. To the kind and helpful Jenni Grey, you have been more than a coordinator; you have been a gracious support, thank you. Dr Grainne Kelly, your kindness and positivity are infectious. Thank you for being there with a kind smile and encouragement.

To every one of the following foundations, which have supported my study, I am truly grateful: Liisa ja Aarre Koskenalustan Säätiö, Turun Yliopistosäätiö, Liikesivistysrahasto, Top Säätiö, Turku School of Economics Support Foundation, Marita and Heikki Vaiste Rahasto, Oskar Öflunds Stiftelse, Letterstedtska föreningen, Kansan Sivistysrahasto, Turun Kauppaopetussäätiö, Suomalainen Konkordia Liitto, Suomen Kulttuurirahasto, Rauno Virtanen Rahasto, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To the amazing, defiantly resilient, beautiful, strong, funny, and simply remarkable women in my study: you have taught me more about motherhood and

defiant resilience than I could ever have imagined. Getting to know you over these years has transformed me as both a woman and a mother. I am eternally grateful to you all for allowing me into your lives, for meeting your families, and for all the laughs, tears, drinks, and meals we shared. Without you, none of this would have been possible. Your stories have transformed me and others. I have a new respect for humanity and humility after knowing you all, and am grateful for that. To the city of Liverpool, you also have captured my heart.

As a neurodivergent woman at this stage in my life, I don't have many friends; it has been a sometimes-painful realization, but one that I have accepted, however reluctantly. The precious few I can turn to, I treasure. Clara and Senna, your support as fellow mothers to such special children is priceless; you have been invaluable on this journey. I thank you for your experience, your support, and just for being defiantly you. Natalie, Carrie and Elisabeth, our quick bursts of motherhood commiseration are sometimes the only things that get me through the day. Lauri, I am so grateful for your support through the years, in both tears and joy. Allyn, for over 35 years, I have cherished your friendship. Joette, thank you for the support and the laughs. Mimi you are golden. To Ville and Jerome (RIP), I remain grateful for you in so many ways, as you creep into my thoughts and remind me of just how wonderful you both were. To my soul-sister, Rima: meeting you was simply fate. Your straight-talking, supportive questioning, and never-ending encouragement from across the world have been a treasure, my handmaid. To my co-author and friend, Dr. Linh Duong: being paired with you at the start of this PhD was the beginning of a great collaboration. You have achieved amazing things in such a short time, and I am so proud of you. For the ever-present support of musical geniuses, Nick Cave, Florence Welch, Ian Curtis, Siouxsie Sioux, Billie Holiday, Depeche Mode, and others, I carry you with me daily.

To my family in the USA: I know the topic of this thesis has been a little outside the everyday scope of your lives, but your curiosity and encouragement, Mom, Dad, Anthony, Nico, Auntie Lori, Uncle Al, Auntie Chris, Auntie Carmen, and Kay, have been deeply felt. Mom, I cannot thank you enough for reading through all my work and providing daily, unwavering support. You have been my greatest champion. I love you.

Marco, for 29 years now, I would not have survived these challenges without your patience, your love, and your role as the hands-on dad our children and I rely on. You have talked me off ledges, fixed my graphs, and made things "pretty" when I was unable to do so myself. Always there with a cocktail or a croissant, I never feel lost when I know you are there; I see how our children see that strength in you, too. Thank you for watching me grow and for pulling me back when I fly too close to the stars.

To my babies: I am not sure what I ever did to be lucky enough to be your mom, but it is the most precious gift and the thing I am MOST proud of. Eicca, my little blue-eyed boy, you taught me what a mother's love should be. You have inspired and challenged me, and without you, life would be quite boring. Your laugh is infectious, my "stinky guy," and seeing you gain independence is a dream come true. Iian Curtis, your kindness and compassionate nature will carry you far. Watching you become a man has been transformative; I cherish your bear hugs and your ability to truly see others. Elasia-Day, my smart, determined girl: I see myself in your drive to be seen. You will change perceptions; you will right the too many wrongs in this world, know I am always here for you. I am by your side—all of you—as your loudest supporter, even in the times you might prefer silence.

Ultimately, this dissertation stands as a monument to the power of defiance. To those certain women in the organization, who shall not be named, you deceitful shrews who relentlessly attempted to undermine and discourage me: thank you. You succeeded only in sharpening my resolve and fuelling a fire you were never capable of extinguishing. I never once doubted my worth, even when you made it your professional hobby to try to convince me otherwise.

There is a special, lonely place in this world for women who spend their lives attempting to dim the lights of others; I wish you joy in the silence there. I have reached the summit you insisted was out of my reach, and I can assure you, the view is spectacular. As Nick Cave so poignantly states: 'Look at me now, boom boom boom!'"

Date: January 25, 2026
Regina Casteleijn-Osorno

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Table of Contents	9
List of Original Publications	12
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Personal motivations behind this study.....	13
1.1.1 Caregiving Experiences and Study Focus	15
1.1.2 Conceptual Definitions.....	17
1.2 Unexplored areas in the study	17
1.3 Study Objectives	21
1.4 Study Approach.....	24
1.5 Structure of the study	25
2 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks and Literature Review.....	27
2.1 Feminist Ethics of Care	27
2.2 Well-being as a phenomenon	30
2.3 Enrichment Theory	32
2.4 Resilience Theory.....	34
2.4.1 Resilience as Defiance of Normative Motherhood	35
2.4.2 Resilience in Practice: Support in caregiving and entrepreneurship	37
2.5 Chapter Summary and Synthesis of Underexplored Areas.....	38
3 Methodology.....	40
3.1 Paradigmatic and Epistemological Framing.....	40
3.2 Study Design.....	43
3.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment.....	44
3.4 Data Collection Methods	45
3.4.1 LEGO® Serious Play (LSP).....	46
3.4.1.1 LSP Procedures.....	47
3.4.1.2 Ethical and Methodological Considerations...	48
3.4.2 Photovoice	48
3.4.2.1 Theoretical and Ethical Alignment.....	49
3.4.2.2 Implementation in This Study.....	50
3.4.2.3 Supplementary Methods	50
3.4.2.4 Data Collection Procedure	51

3.5	Data Analysis	51
3.5.1	Hermeneutic Interpretivist Lens applied for LSP data analysis	54
3.5.2	IPA applied for analysis of Photovoice data	55
3.6	Reflexivity and Theoretical Grounding	56
3.6.1	Ethical Considerations, Consent, and Confidentiality ..	58
3.7	Trustworthiness and Rigor	59
3.8	Summary	60
4	Empirical Articles	62
4.1	Article I: Uncovering Well-being: The Complex Realities of Mompreneurs with Additional Needs Children through LEGO® Serious Play®	64
4.2	Article II: A Fresh Perspective on Entrepreneurship as a Career for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs Children	65
4.3	Article III: Mompreneurship and Resilience: Exploring Entrepreneurship for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs	68
4.4	Article IV: Well-being in Flux: A Longitudinal Study of Mothers Balancing Caregiving and Entrepreneurship	69
4.5	Article V: Now is the Time for Joy: Exploring Joy as Resistance in Maternal Entrepreneurship	71
5	Discussion	73
5.1	Introduction: revisiting the study objectives	73
5.2	Care and entrepreneurship: interwoven practices	74
5.3	Identity, well-being, and success	76
5.3.1	Entrepreneurial Well-being	77
5.4	Resilience in everyday entrepreneurial-caregiving practices ..	78
5.5	Role Enrichment and Positioning of Findings	83
5.7	Contributions	84
5.7.1	Theoretical Contribution: Caregiving entrepreneurship	85
5.7.2	Methodological Contribution: Individual LSP interviews	86
5.7.3	Policy contribution	88
5.8	Limitations and Future Study Agenda	90
6	Conclusion	93
	Abbreviations	95
	List of References	96
	Appendices	112
	Original Publications	117

Tables

Table 1.	Integrative Research Design: The Hierarchical Alignment of Paradigm, Theory, and Focal Phenomenon.	42
Table 2.	Summary of participants.	45
Table 3.	Stages and description of the LEGO® Serious Play interview.	48
Table 4.	Comparative Table: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) vs. Hermeneutic Phenomenology.	53
Table 5.	Empirical and conceptual articles included in this study*.	62
Table 6.	Identified well-being themes and observed transitions.	70

Figures

Figure 1.	Identified overlapping underexplored areas addressed in this study.	21
Figure 2.	Articles and their relationship to the study question. Sub-questions included in an article are indicated by the green boxes.	24
Figure 3.	The conceptual centring of well-being as the primary phenomenon of interest within the study.	31
Figure 4.	Resilience is about the ability to adapt and influence well-being in a positive way.	35
Figure 5.	The Conceptual Architecture of the Study.	39
Figure 6.	Resilience as a shared experience.	81
Figure 7.	The path from caregiver to entrepreneur bridging concept of caregiving entrepreneurship.	86
Figure 8.	A schematic representation of the LPS methodology.	88
Figure 9.	Policies to support the concept of caregiving entrepreneurship.	89

Appendices

Appendix 1.	The following are the instructions sent to the participants participating in the photovoice study (Article IV).	112
Appendix 2.	The following was sent to all participants to obtain Consent to Participate in the Study Study.	113
Appendix 3.	Expanded Privacy Notice.	114

List of Original Publications

This study is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

- I Casteleijn-Osorno, R. Uncovering Well-being: The Complex Realities of Mompreneurs with Additional Needs Children through Lego® Serious Play® JBVI (Journal of Business Venturing Insights) Published October, 2024 10.1016/j.jbvi.2024.e00499
- II Casteleijn-Osorno, R. A fresh perspective on entrepreneurship as a career for mothers to additional needs children: Published in The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Published January 2025 <https://doi.org/10.1177/14657503251317>
- III Casteleijn-Osorno, R. and Hytti, U. Mompreneurship and Resilience: Exploring Entrepreneurship for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs: Published in The Business Study Quarterly, February, 2025 10.117723409444251315485
- IV Casteleijn-Osorno, R. Well-being in Flux: A Longitudinal Study of Mothers Balancing Caregiving and Entrepreneurship under review at the International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship (Work in progress) (2026)
- V Casteleijn-Osorno, R. Now is the time for joy: Entrepreneurial Mothering, Care Work, and Feminist Resistance, under revision at Journal of Community, Work & Family (February 2026)

The original publications have been reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders.

1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the rationale underpinning my doctoral study. While a more detailed examination of the topic unfolds in the subsequent chapters, I begin by sharing my personal motivations, which illustrate how this inquiry is rooted in my own lived experiences. The chapter then presents the overarching study aims and concludes with an overview of the study's structure.

1.1 Personal motivations behind this study

Parenting a child with an additional need is not something most people plan for. It is a role often handed to mothers suddenly and without warning, preparation, or even prior consideration. Over the past decade, I have balanced many roles, including student and entrepreneur, as I have navigated the complex terrain of raising three remarkably resilient children, two of whom have additional needs¹I have become increasingly aware of the growing attention this topic is receiving. Some of this attention, I suspect, is driven by political agendas or broader social movements, but much of it is also visible within everyday conversations happening in online motherhood communities and with other mothers casually in the waiting rooms of one of the many appointments we were attending.

The title of this study emerged through reflection on my adult life's trajectory, particularly the past two decades. During my first pregnancy, following years of infertility and loss, the music of Nick Cave became a quiet yet hopeful presence, and a stoic example of how music can provide the emotional scaffolding necessary during profound life transitions (Bennett et al., 2024). After more than a decade of longing for our first child, his arrival should have been the culmination of joy. Yet, without any prior indication, he was born with profound and complex additional needs, a

¹ For this study, the term 'additional needs' is used to include neurodivergent and physically disabled children. These needs could be developmental, physical, learning, behavioural or sensory. This term is used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities or with financial, community-related or resource disadvantages. Additional needs may warrant special education, training or therapy (Children and Young People's Services, National Health Services, UK, 2024).

shock that reshaped our lives from the very beginning, and a common experience for many parents whose child's diagnosis is unexpected (Kearney & Griffin, 2001).

In the midst of the years of isolation, grief, and uncertainty that followed, Nick Cave's music became a constant companion and source of solace, echoing findings that music can serve as an essential resource in difficult times (Hanser et al., 2016). Whereas some might seek comfort in religion, I turned instead to music that resonated deeply, offering hope in times of sorrow, resonating with the way art and music have been recognized as fostering emotional resilience (Ayyildiz et al., 2025). One lyric repeatedly came to mind when reflecting on my journey and epitomized my caregiving and scholarly trajectory:

“Out of sorrow entire worlds have been built, out of longing great wonders have been willed” (Cave, 1997, track 6, *The Boatman's Call*).

These words have transcended poetic prose to become a conceptual lens through which I explore the intricate interplay of loss and hope that shapes my experiences as a mother, caregiver, entrepreneur, and researcher.

Through this interpretive lens, I encountered the concept of chronic sorrow early in my doctoral journey while examining motherhood in the context of raising a child with additional needs (Raap et al., 2024). Originally introduced by Olshansky in 1962 and later described in the caregiving literature (Patrick-Ott & Ladd, 2010), chronic sorrow refers to the enduring grief experienced when a child does not meet developmental milestones typical for their peers. It is a recurrent and layered emotional experience, reactivated at each missed milestone (Coughlin & Sethares, 2017). For me, this phenomenon was particularly acute as I witnessed my two younger children, twins born just two years after my eldest, progress through developmental stages that he could not. As young as three years old, the twins began to understand and explain to us and others that their older brother was incapable of achieving what they could, a realization consistent with study on sibling awareness in the context of disability (Seltzer et al., 2005).

This awareness brought with it a disheartening yet ultimately accepted reality for our family: the simple fact that certain abilities might remain forever beyond my eldest son's reach. Yet, interwoven with this sorrow was a contrasting and equally potent force, a fierce and unwavering hope through to all of my children. This persistent and profound hope found its echo in the music I cherished. Study has noted that for many mothers, hope becomes a sustaining and creative force in navigating the challenges of raising a child with additional needs (Barnett et al., 2003). For me, it came to signify the act of building, “out of longing,” a world where each of my children could thrive and achieve milestones in their own distinct ways. Over time, this hope paired up with determination and found expression in spaces, both physical and virtual, that became vital extensions of my caregiving journey.

1.1.1 Caregiving Experiences and Study Focus

As comparative narratives from other mothers emerged, some raw and vulnerable, others pragmatic, these predominantly online communities became safe spaces to share daily realities without any judgment. Study has shown that such peer networks provide important opportunities to exchange experiences, track developmental progress, and navigate the complexities of overlapping diagnoses (Hemming & Akhurst, 2009; Margalit & Raskind, 2009), which was certainly true in my isolating experience.

Additionally, as a foreign mother living in Finland, I often experienced what the literature on foreign mothers supports, that many resources for families of AN children are difficult to access due to linguistic, cultural, and bureaucratic barriers (Heino & Lillrank, 2022; Khanlou et al., 2015). The nuanced and often hidden knowledge needed to work through support systems was frequently obscured by technical language and unspoken rules, which I was not privy to (Go, 2025; Sen & Yurtsever, 2007). Each time I uncovered a new piece of information, likely a legal loophole, or a way to challenge a decision about my child delivered in a language I barely understood, coldly through my mailbox, I felt a renewed sense of strength and determination (Dijkstra & Rommes, 2022). Every insight provided a measure of control and purpose, strengthening my role as my child's advocate, aimed to challenge the complexities and deception of the system (Choe et al., 2023).

Over time, I cultivated greater resilience and adopted a more strategic approach to managing these challenges, becoming increasingly resourceful in addressing the ongoing and evolving demands of caregiving, demands that persist and intensify as my son grows, with no indication that they will ever cease (McCann et al., 2012). This internal transformation aligns with feminist ethics-of-care scholarship, which emphasises resilience and adaptive strategies as central to the lived experiences of caregiving mothers facing systemic barriers, along with the silent acceptance of knowing challenges do not decrease with age, but rather, evolve (Kittay, 2001). Yet despite this personal growth, a persistent question echoed in my mind after every meeting, therapy session, consultation, or examination that disrupted the rhythm of the day. While I valued the moments spent with my son, gaining insight into his challenges, witnessing his development at his own pace, and strengthening our bond, these appointments often consumed hours each week, and in the middle of the workday. I found myself repeatedly wondering:

How do other mothers sustain full-time employment while raising a child with additional needs?

This question quickly moved beyond abstract contemplation to become deeply embedded in my daily personal reflections, ultimately forming the foundation of this

doctoral study. Motivated by an urgent and intensely personal drive, I sought not only to contribute financially to my family but also to reclaim a sense of self that transcended caregiving. I observed with longing mothers who inhabited roles and spaces shaped by pursuits beyond care alone. Crucially, I needed to create a space where I could express my identity outside of motherhood, one that would support my overall well-being, while ensuring that my caregiving responsibilities and the time devoted to my children remained uncompromised.

This longing propelled me toward a degree in entrepreneurship, which ultimately led to the establishment of my own business. Navigating the pursuit of a master's degree, while raising three children under the age of three and managing a new business, was neither straightforward nor simple. It demanded careful negotiation of logistical, emotional, and financial complexities, supported by the partnership of a capable and flexible collaborator in the form of my husband. From the outset, it was clear that any business endeavour I undertook would need to be designed around the needs of my family, particularly my son's numerous engagements. Through my master's studies, it became evident that the intersection of motherhood and entrepreneurial identities is a complex and often conflicting phenomenon, even for women with neurotypical children.

Yet, somewhat surprisingly, the world of entrepreneurship felt instinctive and familiar. The multitasking, problem-solving, advocacy, resilience, empathy, and networking skills I had cultivated through caregiving were not only transferable but proved to be invaluable assets in this new context. I began to see clearly that the hope and sorrow I had experienced during these formative years of motherhood were shared by many other mothers. These qualities, I realised, could be harnessed and developed into practical competencies that not only supported venture creation but also enhanced personal well-being. For me, entrepreneurship became a pathway to reclaim an identity beyond 'just' being a mother to child(ren) with additional needs, but another identity I could embrace, that of 'Cupcake Goddess', while remaining true to my own values deeply rooted in care, purpose, and inclusion.

This personal realisation led me to wonder how other mothers might also experience the convergence of caregiving and entrepreneurship, and how these intertwined practices could shape both identity and well-being. It is from this point of inquiry that the study takes shape. Using qualitative and arts-based methods, it explores the intersection where caregiving and entrepreneurship converge. While women's entrepreneurship has been examined extensively (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Deng et al., 2025) and caregiving labour has received some scholarly attention (O'Riordan et al., 2023), the specific intersection of mothering AN children and entrepreneurial identity, particularly from the perspective of well-being and lived experience, remains underexplored.

This study, therefore, offers both a personal and scholarly examination of how such mothers carve out a meaningful space for themselves through entrepreneurial

activity. It seeks to contribute fresh insights to entrepreneurship studies, feminist care ethics, and well-being discourse, with relevance both academically and socially. Personally, it is intended to honour the often invisible, resilient mothers who are redefining the boundaries of work and care on their own terms.

Building on the intersecting domains of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being, this study introduces the concept of caregiving entrepreneurship to articulate how mothers simultaneously navigate intensive caregiving responsibilities while engaging in entrepreneurial activities, applying skills gained through their experiences. This lens captures the adaptive strategies, relational ethics, and skill development that emerge from caregiving, highlighting how maternal labour can generate both personal agency and social impact. By foregrounding the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs, the concept addresses a critical unexplored area in existing literature, which often treats caregiving and entrepreneurship as separate spheres, overlooking the complex ways in which they intersect and mutually inform one another.

1.1.2 Conceptual Definitions

Given the centrality of care and well-being to this dissertation's contribution, it is vital to define these concepts as dynamic practices and not as independent variables. In this study, caregiving is defined as productive care labour, an embodied and relational practice that involves the strategic management of resources, both cognitive and emotional, to sustain the very lives of their children (Kittay, 2001). Similarly, well-being is conceptualized as situated well-being, not a fixed state of happiness, but an alignment between social structures and resources, which are constantly negotiated between the competing demands of the household and the venture (Wiklund et al., 2019).

By establishing these definitions, the dissertation moves away from a realist search for objective truth. Instead, it adopts a relational ontology, dynamic and processual, grounded in the Feminist Ethics of Care (Tronto, 1993). This meta-theoretical stance seeks the truth from within these relationships and is the foundation upon which the subsequent concepts, namely, resilience, joy, and enrichment, are built. Rather than being interchangeable, these concepts form a hierarchy. The Ethics of Care validates the internalized perspective, while enrichment and resilience theories act as the mechanisms through which situated well-being is either achieved or depleted.

1.2 Unexplored areas in the study

Grounded in the critical intersection of motherhood, entrepreneurship, and caregiving for AN children, this study responds to several underexplored areas within the existing

literature, particularly the relationship between caregiving responsibilities and entrepreneurial sustainability, including the influence of entrepreneurship on the well-being of mothers raising AN children. While study on women's entrepreneurship often considers work–life balance (Manoharan et al., 2025) and, on occasion, “momprenneurship” when linking motherhood and enterprise (Amorim et al., 2025), it rarely engages with the unique and layered realities of mothers who shoulder both the intensive demands of caregiving for a child with additional needs (Cardenas & Colwell, 2024) and the challenges of entrepreneurship. Even less understood is how entrepreneurship might operate as a deliberate strategy to safeguard and enhance maternal well-being when traditional employment is constrained by systemic barriers or how caregiving itself cultivates skills, adaptive strategies, and resilience that shape entrepreneurial practice.

This study identifies three interrelated underexplored areas within the literature, each of which informs the central study question.

1. Well-being experiences of entrepreneuring mothers raising children with additional needs

Study shows that mothers of AN children are disproportionately likely to be the primary caregiver (Gumas et al., 2023) and to reduce or leave the workforce due to the unpredictable, complex, and non-negotiable nature of caregiving demands (Østerud et al., 2024; Scott, 2018). Such disruptions can threaten long-term economic security, career progression, and social connectedness, factors directly linked to reduced well-being (Saleem et al., 2024).

For some mothers, entrepreneurship emerges as a means to reclaim control over time, finances, and identity, enabling the creation of work that aligns with family needs (Ekinsmyth, 2013). In these contexts, entrepreneurship can function not merely as an economic pursuit (Shir et al., 2025) but as a space for sustaining emotional well-being, preserving selfhood, and resisting social marginalisation through community engagement (England & Henley, 2024). Yet, mothers who care for AN children remain markedly underrepresented in this study, leaving unexamined how their entrepreneurial engagement is shaped by distinctive well-being experiences, how caregiving operates as an often invisible formative factor in entrepreneurship, and how moving beyond deficit framings of motherhood and caregiving might reveal more complex, generative narratives of entrepreneuring.

2. Caregiving as an invisible formative factor in entrepreneurship

In mainstream entrepreneurship literature, caregiving is largely absent as an explicit influence on entrepreneurial decision-making and sustainability. Work–life balance discourse often assumes a normative family structure (Zaitouni et al., 2024), overlooking the intensified, long-term, and unpredictable care responsibilities that

shape the daily realities of mothers raising AN children (Hennekam et al., 2025). This omission not only marginalises caregiving conceptually and empirically but also limits the understanding of how a caregiving lens can reframe interpretations of entrepreneurial motivation, including the processes involved, and success.

For instance, resilience is widely understood as a dynamic process of adaptation and the management of stress or adversity (Windle, 2010), and actively shapes how mothers prioritise responsibilities and navigate caregiving challenges. Crucially, within this framework, resilience and well-being are not synonymous. Rather, resilience can be understood as a *defiant* practice of survival, one that often entails a substantial *resilience tax* manifested through cumulative mental, physical, and embodied strain sustained by mothers. Consequently, a mother-caregiver-entrepreneur may exhibit pronounced resilience while simultaneously experiencing a depletion of situated well-being. Within the entrepreneurial context, resilience may therefore be conceptualised as a formative resource, and one that enables persistence and action, yet does not necessarily sustain well-being.

Drawing from a relational ontology grounded in the Feminist Ethics of Care, this study conceptualizes caregiving not as an external constraint but as a generative site of growth and identity transformation. This foundational perspective is further supported and operationalized through the complementary frameworks of Resilience Theory and Role Enrichment Theory. For instance, resilience, understood as a dynamic process of adaptation and the management of stress or adversity (Windle, 2010), shapes how mothers prioritise responsibilities and navigate challenges in caregiving. Within the entrepreneurial context, it can be considered that resilience has the potential to serve as a formative resource, enabling mothers to translate caregiving-derived skills and values into business practices that align with their well-being and sense of identity. This perspective, therefore, frames caregiving as an interdependent, socially embedded activity (Hughes et al., 2005), challenging profit-oriented narratives that typically characterise entrepreneurship (Shir and Ryff, 2021), placing entrepreneurship as a means of building networks and influencing others.

Prior literature on women highlights that network-building is not only central to business success (Neergaard et al., 2005) but also a key source of social support for mothers of AN children (Ammari and Schoenebeck, 2015; Solomon et al., 2001). These networks provide both practical resources and areas of emotional support, particularly for mothers of AN children. Furthermore, such networks appear to serve multiple purposes: they provide connections and the sharing of experiences and advice, while also creating spaces of mutual understanding around the demands of caregiving. What remains underexplored, however, is how competencies gained through unpaid, often invisible care work, such as building networks, advocacy, and planning for the unplannable, might underpin the benefits of venture creation and shape the well-being of mothers (Holt, 2024; Keary, 2025). It further considers how

traits applicable to entrepreneurship, including resilience and enrichment, shape identity negotiation and the experience of role conflict for mother-caregivers.

3. Moving beyond deficit framings of motherhood and caregiving

Prevailing narratives about motherhood and caregiving for AN children are frequently deficit-oriented (Hastings, 2016), emphasising burden, stress, strain, and financial cost (Mundakir et al., 2024; Kumari et al., 2025). Such framings overshadow the affective, identity-forming, and life-enhancing dimensions described by mothers themselves, such as joy, agency, resilience, and identity enrichment (Beighton and Wills, 2019; Munsell and O'Malley, 2019). This deficit lens obscures caregiving's transformative potential and its capacity to enrich both personal and professional domains. Enrichment theory (Kulik et al., 2015) provides an alternative frame, suggesting that skills, values, and experiences gained in one role can enhance performance in another, with the experience of raising a child with additional needs seen as rewarding and positive experiences (Blacher and Baker, 2007). Aligned with this theory, which emphasizes adaptive growth in the face of adversity, previous study identified forms of reciprocity between caregiving and other domains of life (Reid et al., 2005), yet it remains unclear how such dynamics unfold when caregiving is intertwined with entrepreneurship in the lives of mothers.

While there is no widely recognized, standardized scale specifically termed "motherhood joy" in regard to caregiving of a child with additional needs, several measures can be used to assess related constructs such as maternal well-being, family enrichment, and the effect of caregiving on mothers. These measures often focus on aspects such as coping, stress (Arif et al., 2021), and caregiving burden, providing insights into the complexities of motherhood in this caregiving context. However, the emphasis is less on the experiences of joy by the mother and rather on the family unit, something not applied in this study. Applying the mother perspective, the study explores how caregiving can strengthen the mother-child bond, enrich maternal identity, and equip mothers with applicable traits (Rios et al., 2021) related to caregiving in other areas of her life, such as creating an entrepreneurial venture.

Across these underexplored areas runs a common thread, the complex and often unspoken dimensions of maternal well-being when raising a child with additional needs. Experiences such as resilience and advocacy, developed through caregiving and life events before motherhood, often remain just beneath the surface of entrepreneurial narratives. These experiences coexist with public displays of mothers as brave advocates or "motherhood warriors" (Sousa, 2011). The primary study is puzzled in a manner that emerges from the accumulating tension between these concepts. If caregiving is understood as productive care labour (Kittay, 2001), then the mother-caregiver-entrepreneur is not merely balancing these multiple roles; she is navigating structural realities. Here, the practice of defiant resilience provides the

survival mechanism, but often at the direct cost of her situated well-being. This establishes a key point of tension for investigation. While enrichment theory suggests that these dual roles can be generative and provide moments of maternal joy, the structural ceiling of gendered labour ensures this process is one of constant negotiation. It is this specific, unexamined interplay, the tapestry of cost, resilience, and identity, that necessitates the following study inquiry. This dissertation argues that these dimensions form a complex tapestry of lived experience, where the threads of defiant resilience and identity enrichment are woven together to shape the mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs' situated well-being. Addressing these dynamics makes it possible to uncover the multiple ways motherhood, caregiving, and entrepreneurship intersect to shape women's lives, as illustrated in Figure 1.

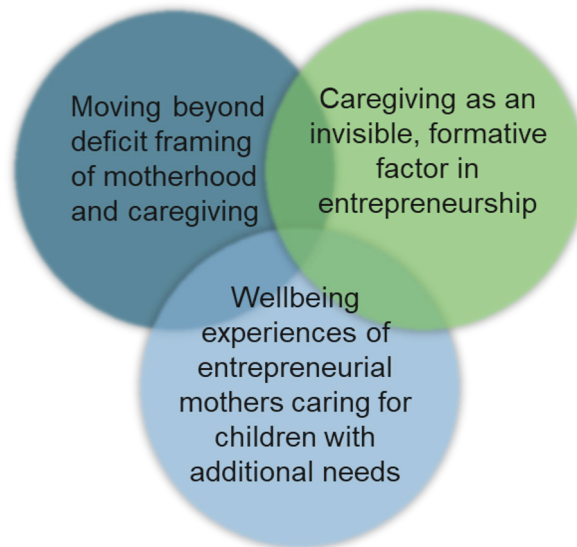


Figure 1. Identified overlapping underexplored areas addressed in this study.

1.3 Study Objectives

To address the identified gaps in entrepreneurship scholarship, the main objective of this study is to examine the dynamic tapestry in which entrepreneurial activity and caregiving responsibilities intersect to shape the well-being and identity of mother-caregivers. Drawing on the Feminist Ethics of Care as a foundational relational ontology, the study employs role enrichment theory and resilience theory as its primary analytical mechanisms to explain the transfer of skills and the emotional costs of persistence.

This conceptual framing enables a critical exploration of caregiving not as an external variable, but as a formative practice that determines whether entrepreneurship

enhances or depletes situated well-being. While existing literature often celebrates the resilience of entrepreneuring mothers, it frequently overlooks the resilience tax, a visceral and mounting toll paid by mothers who must navigate systemic care gaps to maintain professional legitimacy.

Globally, approximately 16% of the global population is affected by some form of additional need, with mothers most frequently assuming the role of primary caregivers (Barratt et al., 2025; Home & Webster, 2006; Global Disability Summit, 2025). In the United States alone, over 14 million households, roughly 19.4% of families, include a child with additional needs (Vrankić Pavon et al., 2023; Young, 2022; Zablotsky et al., 2023). These statistics underscore the importance of understanding how mothers, as primary caregivers, navigate the dual demands of care and work. Sustainable strategies such as entrepreneurship may offer a pathway for mothers to reconcile caregiving responsibilities with meaningful, self-directed work that supports both family well-being and personal identity (Scott, 2010). At the heart of this study lies the lived experience of situated well-being, conceptualized as a dynamic state of flourishing maintained amidst the tension between intensive caregiving and entrepreneurial activity. To address the need for a clearly articulated focal phenomenon within phenomenological inquiry, this study stabilizes well-being as the central phenomenon of interest.

This focus informs the central study question:

How is situated well-being co-constructed and sustained by mother-caregivers within the intersecting lived realities of intensive caregiving and entrepreneurial activity?

The study is presented as a compilation of three individual studies comprised of five articles, each contributing to one or more of the identified sub-study questions, which investigate the mechanisms influencing this central phenomenon:

1. *How does entrepreneurship influence and shape the well-being of mothers of additional needs children?*
2. *How does the lived experience of caregiving shape mothers' entrepreneurial choices, practices, and definitions of success as components of their well-being?*
3. *How do caregiving and entrepreneurship together facilitate the emergence of skills, identity, and joy as pillars of sustained well-being?*

By focusing on the positive and potentially transformative dimensions of raising a an AN child, this study asks whether and how entrepreneurship might serve as a source of resilience, autonomy, joy, and social contribution for mothers, their families, and their communities (Branca et al., 2025; Cardenas & Colwell, 2024).

It further explores whether the skills and adaptive strategies honed through caregiving anchor entrepreneurial practice within the caregiving context, positioning it as a primary vehicle for personal and collective well-being. Figure 2 shows how the articles address the main study question and sub-questions. Specifically, the main study aim and method of each article are presented:

Article I: Uncovering Well-being: The Complex Realities of Mompreneurs with Additional Needs Children through LEGO® Serious Play®. This study responds to sub-question 1: How does entrepreneurship influence/shape the well-being of mothers with children with additional needs? Lego® Serious Play® and a hermeneutic constructivist lens.

Article II: A Fresh Perspective on Entrepreneurship as a Career for Mothers to Additional Needs Children. This study responds to sub-study question 3: How does caregiving contribute to the development of skills, identity, and joy in entrepreneurial mothers? This study asks us to consider entrepreneurship as a means to combine caregiving responsibilities and fulfil personal goals, and apply skills attained through caregiving towards entrepreneurial ventures.

Article III: Mompreneurship and Resilience: Exploring Entrepreneurship for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs. This study responds to sub-study question 3: How does caregiving contribute to the development of skills, identity, and joy in entrepreneurial mothers? Through role conflict theory, we argue that entrepreneurship provides the time and space flexibility necessary to combine work and care roles and to experience the autonomy not available in paid employment, with supportive institutional frameworks, and utilizing acquired applicable skills. Problematizing review.

Article IV: Well-being in Flux: A Longitudinal Study of Mothers Balancing Caregiving and Entrepreneurship. This study responds to both sub-questions 1 and 2, addressing how we experience well-being over time and identifying the temporal nature of well-being. Lego® Serious Play® and a hermeneutic constructivist lens.

Article V: Now is the Time for Joy: Exploring Joy as Resistance in Maternal Entrepreneurship. This study responds to sub-question 2: How does caregiving shape mothers' entrepreneurial choices, practices, and definitions of success? Photovoice and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Research Question	ARTICLE				
	I	II	III	VI	V
How do caregiving, entrepreneurship, and well-being co-shape the lived experiences of mothers raising children with additional needs?					
1. <i>Representation & Wellbeing</i> – How are mother–caregivers of children with additional needs represented in entrepreneurship research, and how does entrepreneurship serve as a strategic response to systemic constraints on their wellbeing?					
2. <i>Caregiving as a Formative Influence</i> – In what ways does caregiving shape entrepreneurial activity, decision-making, and definitions of success?					
3. <i>Resilience & Enrichment</i> – How does caregiving contribute to resilience, enrichment, and the development of competencies, identity, and joy in entrepreneuring mothers?					

Figure 2. Articles and their relationship to the study question. Sub-questions included in an article are indicated by the green boxes.

1.4 Study Approach

This qualitative study adopts a care-centred and feminist lens to explore the intersection of caregiving and entrepreneurship among mothers of AN children. A participatory approach is employed, using narrative inquiry to capture participants’ lived experiences and meaning-making processes. This approach allows for rich, context-sensitive exploration of complex, emotionally and socially positioned phenomena, including the interplay of caregiving responsibilities, entrepreneurial identity, and well-being.

Qualitative narratives align with feminist and care-centred principles, emphasizing relationality, reflexivity, and ethical attention to participants’ perspectives. The participatory approach enables creative engagement through the utilized methods LEGO® Serious Play and Photovoice, eliciting insights that conventional interviews may not be able to uncover. This is particularly relevant in

the case of sensitive topics such as well-being and caregiving, where a compassionate stance as a researcher is paramount (Hansen and Trank, 2016). Overall, this approach is suited to understanding how mothers navigate and integrate their dual roles as caregivers and entrepreneurs, providing a foundation for the conceptual framework that maps the relationships among caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being.

1.5 Structure of the study

Following this introduction, which outlined the study background, purpose, and central study questions.

Chapter 2 establishes the conceptual architecture of the study by unpacking the relationship between the central phenomenon of interest, the explanatory theories utilised, and the ethical orientation guiding the inquiry. Moving beyond a lateral presentation of frameworks, this chapter explicitly positions well-being, conceptualized in this study as a lived, relational, and dynamic state of flourishing, as the central phenomenon under investigation.

To analyse the mechanisms influencing this core phenomenon, the study employs two distinct explanatory social theories: enrichment theory, utilised to explain the cross-role transfer of resources and competencies from caregiving to entrepreneurship, and resilience theory, framed as the dynamic and often costly process of adaptation under sustained adversity.

These explanatory frameworks are situated within a broader Feminist ethics of care. Rather than serving as a third social theory, the ethics of care functions as the study's foundational ethical and epistemological orientation. This positioning strengthens the normative commitments of the research, ensuring that the interpretation of findings remains anchored in the value of relational labour and maternal agency. By differentiating between these levels of theory, the chapter provides a rigorous and integrative architecture that avoids overlapping concepts and foregrounds the complex interplay of joy, grief, and legitimacy in the lives of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs.

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the study paradigm, methodological framework, and design of the study. This includes the use of a Constructivist Epistemology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology, which together form the philosophical foundation for exploring lived experience and meaning-making in the context of caregiving and entrepreneurship. Additionally, Chapter 3 shows the methodological design and practical execution of the study. It outlines the interpretive, longitudinal, and qualitative nature of the study and details how the empirical data were collected and analysed. The chapter introduces innovative, participatory methods, including LEGO® Serious Play® and Photovoice, alongside Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the primary method of analysis. Attention is also

given to ethical considerations, the positionality of the researcher, and processes of reflexivity, all of which contribute to transparency and rigor in the study process.

Chapter 4 presents the five peer-reviewed journal articles that constitute the core of this study. Collectively, these articles address the central research question, the sub-questions, and the overarching theme concerning the influence of entrepreneurship on the well-being of entrepreneuring mothers caring for AN children. At the time of this thesis submission, the articles are at distinct stages of the publication cycle to reflect the ongoing evolution of the research program. Specifically, three of the articles are already published in peer-reviewed journals, providing an established empirical and theoretical foundation. The fourth article is currently in the "Revise and Resubmit" (R&R) stage, having undergone formal review and being positioned for final refinements. The fifth article is currently a work in progress, designed to integrate the cumulative insights of the study into a final theoretical contribution. By presenting these works in their various stages, this chapter illustrates the developmental trajectory of the doctoral project and the rigorous peer-validation process that has shaped the study's findings.

Chapter 5 synthesises the principal findings emerging from all five articles. It integrates these findings with existing literature and the stated study questions, identifying recurring patterns, underlying tensions, and notable contradictions within participants' narratives. The chapter concludes by outlining the study's theoretical and practical contributions and acknowledged limitations, with proposed directions for future study.

Finally, Chapter 6 offers closing reflections on the study and its broader significance.

2 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks and Literature Review

This chapter establishes the theoretical architecture of the study. Moving beyond a flat application of social theories, this dissertation distinguishes between philosophical positioning, interpretive frameworks, and the central phenomenon under investigation. The study is situated within a feminist ethics of care, which serves as the overarching epistemological and ethical orientation. Rather than adopting a detached perspective, this study embraces a relational ontology that foregrounds the interconnectedness of care and the embodied, lived experiences of mothers.

Under this ethical and ontological framework, enrichment and resilience are positioned as distinct interpretive frameworks. Enrichment theory allows for an exploration of the generative transfer of resources from care to business ventures, while resilience theory, specifically through the lens of defiant resilience, provides a framework for understanding the adaptive processes that enable mothers to navigate sustained structural adversity. At the centre is the central phenomenon, situated well-being, where these interpretive lenses help reveal how adaptive mechanisms and personal identity are woven together to shape the lives of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs.

2.1 Feminist Ethics of Care

This study is situated within a feminist ethics of care, which functions as the overarching ethical orientation and epistemological commitment of the dissertation. Care is not merely another variable to be measured. In this study, care is taken seriously and viewed as a relational means of being that underpins how these mothers live, work, and care for others. By adopting this lens, caregiving moves beyond the idea of a secondary, and assumed domestic duty, instead emerging as a central source of knowledge that shapes every aspect of the entrepreneurial journey.

Feminist ethics of care provides a powerful framework for opening up how mothers of AN children navigate the varied dimensions of caregiving, including moral and embedded practices. Keller and Kittay (2017) define care as ‘a virtue (or moral value), an attitude or disposition to act, wherein the motivation comes not from one’s own needs and wants, but rather from those who require care’ (Keller and Kittay, 2017, p 545). They go beyond abstract notions of care and agency, revealing the lived

realities of mothers caught between the weight of responsibility and the drive for independence. As such, the social value of care is brought to the foreground (O'Brien et al., 2014) instead of being reduced to a secondary responsibility. Feminist ethics of care frames this as a socially embedded practice, shaped by cultural and structural contexts. Within this framework, this study positions caregiving not as a limitation but as a decisive action, where ethical decisions and personal agency converge.

Viewed through this lens, mothers challenge dominant ideals of “good mothering” by highlighting the importance of mutual responsibility between themselves, as caregivers, and the children for whom they provide care. Situated at the intersection of feminist theory and ethics of care, this perspective emphasizes the relational and ethical dimensions that shape interactions and obligations between caregiver and care receiver (Wrigley, 1997; Tong, 1999). Hilary Graham (1983) conceptualizes caregiving as a labour of love, constituted by two inseparable elements: the physical work of care and the emotional labour required to sustain it. Motherhood itself, however, is not merely a biological role but a socially constructed one, heavily regulated by cultural norms. Within the dominant motherhood discourse, the “good” mother is expected to demonstrate an intuitive attunement to her child’s needs while maintaining limitless amounts of empathy and consistently prioritizing her child above all else (Williamson et al., 2023). She is also positioned as selfless, without independent ambitions, warmly embracing caregiving responsibilities as though they were natural extensions of her identity (Barrett et al., 2016).

Yet, the lived realities of caregiving reveal a starkly different picture. Caring for any child, whether typically developing or with additional needs, requires sustained effort, shaped by the availability of resources. These can be financial, material, emotional, or psychological. The cultural expectation to align with the ideology of the “good mother” can, as Lehner-Mear (2020) argues, become exhausting, particularly when these ideals overlook structural inequalities and the complexity of everyday caregiving, particularly for an AN child. By foregrounding the relational and ethical dynamics of care, this framework resists deficit-oriented framings and instead highlights the moral and notably social significance of caregiving practices. In setting this stage, we can examine how mothers adapt to and even defy normative discourses, while constructing meaning in the context of caregiving and disability, which is both undervalued and overburdened (Østerud et al., 2024).

For mothers caring for an AN child, caregiving requires adaptable skills outside the traditionally required motherhood skills. This unique set of skills (Casteleijn-Osorno and Hytti, 2025) requires fast adaptation necessary to tackle the caregiving challenge presented (Smith-Young et al., 2022). Ethical obligations relating to caregiving co-exist particularly when it comes to mothering an AN child (Boyd, 2010; Williams and Murray, 2015). These mothers frequently experience limits on their autonomy and agency, not only in managing daily responsibilities but also in navigating relationships with other family members, including their (other) children.

These limitations raise important questions about the extent to which a mother is expected or willing to make sacrifices (Baker & Drapela, 2010; Kaniamattam & Oxley, 2021) and how household/care responsibilities should be shared to provide equal care to all children.

This shared bond between mother and child is understood through a feminist ethics of care perspective, which emphasizes the inherent vulnerability of caregiving. From this standpoint, mothers often experience their child's life as deeply entwined with their own. These experiences can encompass both negative aspects, such as discrimination or social stigma, and positive ones, including moments of joy or accomplishment (Scorgie and Sobsey, 2000). The very nature of the caregiver-child relationship suggests that both mother and child mutually influence and shape each other's lived experiences, navigating life in interconnected and reciprocal ways that are entirely dependent on the individual circumstances in which the caregiving is taking place.

Within this epistemological orientation, feminist ethics of care offers a framework for understanding how mothers are socially positioned as primary caregivers. From this perspective, the enduring societal expectation is clear. Mothers are expected to set aside careers and personal ambitions to be continuously available and nurturing for their child(ren) (Malacrida, 2009; Czapskiy, 2012). In this context, caregiving is experienced less as a voluntary choice, but more as a gendered obligation, reflecting structural pressures that compel mothers to prioritize their child's needs over their own. By framing care as an obligation rather than a simple choice, this study interprets the resilience tax of resilience not as an individual failing, but as a normative byproduct of these structural pressures. These pressures take a significant toll on mental well-being, as mothers manage both caregiving and household responsibilities simultaneously (Chen et al., 2025).

The societal expectations surrounding motherhood may conflict with personal autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000), particularly for mothers of AN children. Ethical imperatives to support a child's independence can heighten the tension between meeting caregiving responsibilities and sustaining personal autonomy. Here, autonomy is not merely the freedom to choose, but the availability of mental and physical energy, along with shared responsibility, that enables goal pursuit while responding to ethical demands. This study values autonomy not as detached independence, but as a relational capacity that is either sustained or depleted by the caregiving environment.

Limited access to support and the unexpected yet unwavering caregiving demands can constrain maternal agency, making self-directed goals potentially unattainable. As captured in the title, "The caregiver's life is the uncared-for life," (Sousa et al., 2025), mothers often invest so fully in others that their own well-being is neglected. Empirical studies indicate a profound sense of moral obligation, maternal altruism (Barbosa et al., 2008), that shapes identity and daily existence. Yet, this tension is

actively negotiated through adaptive strategies to reclaim agency. These strategies, including the pursuit of entrepreneurship, are interpreted in this dissertation as ethical acts of resistance against the life of a mother less cared for. Kittay (2002, p. 259) frames informal caregiving labour as “the work of maintaining ourselves and others when we are in a condition of need,” embodying the relational dimensions of care. Maternal autonomy by its very nature is intrinsically linked to the interdependent nature of caregiving (Boyd, 2010). Maternal autonomy exists within a dynamic tension of navigating their own needs, their child's needs, and societal expectations through careful negotiation of boundaries and priorities.

Finally, this ethical orientation provides the valuation for interpreting entrepreneurial practice. For mother-caregivers, ethical and relational imperatives influence daily routines, business decisions, and risk management. Entrepreneurship is adapted to accommodate care demands through flexible schedules and selective engagement (O'Reilly, 2010). In this sense, entrepreneurship becomes a negotiated and relational practice rather than a purely individualistic and economic pursuit (Audretsch et al., 2015). This lens allows for the interpretation of maternal business activity as deeply intertwined with caregiving values, ensuring that success is measured individually and through the lens of relational ethics.

2.2 Well-being as a phenomenon

Having established the feminist ethics of care as the study's overarching ethical orientation, it is necessary to explicitly define and position the central phenomenon under investigation. While well-being has been broadly defined in traditional contexts as "the state of being well, happy, or prosperous" (Guralnik, 1984, p. 1614), this study approaches well-being not as a static condition or in entrepreneurial terms, a metric of economic success, but as a lived experience and a continuously evolving phenomenon. It functions as the unseen motor sustaining survival by mediating daily challenges and shaping moments of experienced sorrow and joy within the daily lives of caregivers. Well-being in this context is not a static individual trait; rather, it is co-constructed, fluctuating as it is influenced by the emotions and relationships of others within the liminal, temporal spaces that emerge intermittently throughout life. Consequently, well-being is shaped by the ongoing continuity and changes that life presents (Hauser et al., 2005).

Positioning well-being as a lived, emotionally charged experience moves beyond narrow, traditional measures and embraces what Sarvimäki (2006) describes as "a holistic, everyday view, including feeling bad" (p. 8). This perspective highlights the temporality and fluidity of well-being, which fluctuates in response to challenges, encounters, and shifting demands, both positive and negative. Even in the absence of conscious reflection, well-being remains an ever-present dimension of maternal life, shaping and being shaped by the day-to-day realities of care. Capturing this complexity

requires deep reflexivity and observation (Healey-Ogden and Austin, 2011), particularly when investigating the intersection of caregiving and entrepreneurship.

By explicitly positioning well-being as the central phenomenon of interest, this study provides a stable ontological focal point for the following analysis. In this research, well-being is defined as a multidimensional state of living well, that is relational and dynamic, encompassing both the hedonic (joy and affect) and eudaimonic (purpose and legitimacy) dimensions of the participant's lives.

Rather than treating well-being as one framework, this study views it as the baseline that is either enriched through the transfer of resources or defended through resilience. Critically, this distinguishes between the two, while resilience is defined as the adaptive capacity to maintain functioning under adversity, it is not synonymous with positive well-being. Indeed, one must acknowledge the cost of resilience, that is the resilience tax, where a participant may remain functional (acting resilient) while their well-being (joy and health) suffers significant erosion.

Central to this dynamic is caregiving, defined here as the reciprocal, ethical commitment to the sustenance of others and a labour that acts as both a primary source of well-being (joy/connection) and a primary drain on resilience (burnout/grief). By centring well-being, this integrative architecture, shown in Figure 3, allows for a nuanced exploration of how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigate these tensions, ensuring that resilience is not mistaken for flourishing, and that the affective realities of grief and joy remain central to the analytical lens.

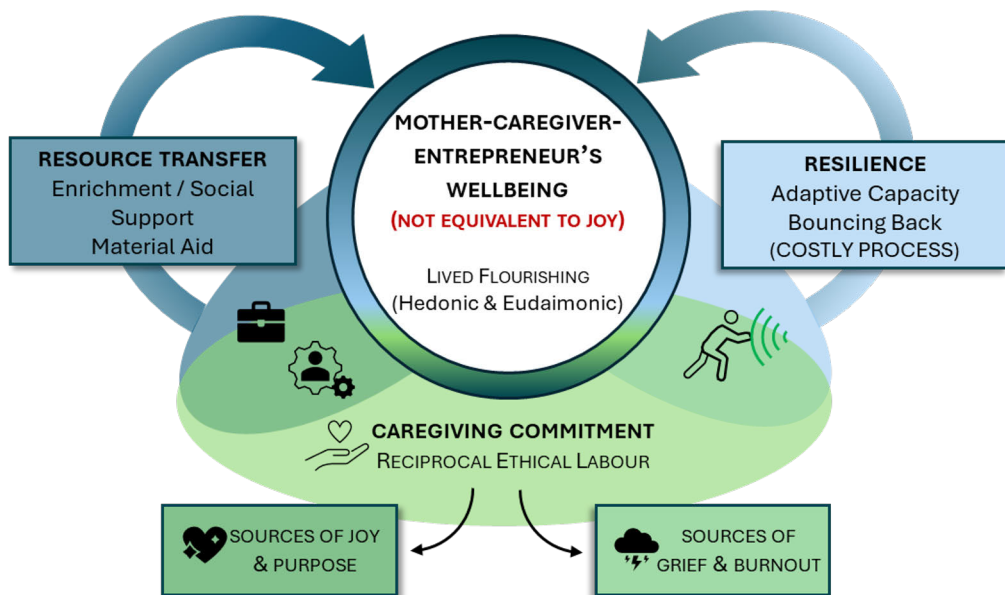


Figure 3. The conceptual centring of well-being as the primary phenomenon of interest within the study.

2.3 Enrichment Theory

Within the conceptual architecture of this study, enrichment theory is restricted to explaining the cross-role resource transfer between caregiving and entrepreneurship. While the study is grounded in an ethical orientation of the feminist ethics of care, Enrichment Theory provides the specific analytical lens for understanding how participation in multiple social roles produces positive outcomes. For mother-caregivers, applying this theoretical perspective argues that skills gained in one role (caregiving) enhance performance or well-being in another (entrepreneurship) (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Owens-Schil, 2025). This perspective contrasts with traditional role conflict frameworks, which emphasize tension and overload when confronted with simultaneous, seemingly conflicting roles. Instead, enrichment theory highlights the positive influence of one role on other roles, suggesting that engagement across domains can foster personal growth and interconnectedness despite identified conflicts or challenges (Al-Saliti et al., 2025).

Through the lens of enrichment theory, mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs value the unique differences of their children while simultaneously learning to recognize and appreciate the distinct strengths that emerge alongside their individual challenges (Esdaile, 2009). In this context, the valuing of difference becomes a generative resource, shaping the specific adaptive competencies mothers carry into their ventures, shaped by their caregiving role. Equally crucial, however, is that these differences are acknowledged and embraced by others, challenging deficit-based perspectives of AN children and instead positioning difference as a source of enrichment. Enrichment theory, therefore, highlights the generative potential of embracing differences, illustrating how diverse abilities not only enrich and strengthen identity but also simultaneously reshape how others perceive and engage with mothers and their children.

Within the context of mother-caregiving, enrichment is fundamentally tied to the hidden work that often occurs outside traditional employment structures. These mothers are frequently described as hidden workers, with contributions on an individual and societal level that remain largely invisible to mainstream economic metrics (Chou et al., 2014). The paradox of enrichment arises in how such work is understood and valued, as Kaplan et al. (2020) highlight that enrichment depends heavily on individual perceptions of what constitutes work and how it is experienced. For example, while housework and care work may be viewed as routine, non-life-enriching domains for some (Geist & Ruppner, 2018), mothers raising AN children often frame these activities as meaningful, and identity-shaping acts of labour (Parchomiuk, 2021).

Enrichment theory helps illuminate this perspective by demonstrating how the competencies developed in the domestic role can positively spill over into the entrepreneurial venture (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For mother-caregivers,

caregiving generates a specific toolbox of competencies, such as complex problem-solving and advocacy, that are highly transferable to the entrepreneurial context and unlikely tools in a mother's toolbox when raising neurotypical children. This raises the question of how such skills might be understood not only as invisible labour but as potential sources of value creation, reframing conventional definitions of productivity in both entrepreneurship and care scholarship.

In addition to primary caregiving, many mothers to AN children assume additional invisible roles such as volunteering, providing peer support, and engaging in advocacy (Doğruel, 2025). These roles facilitate identity-building and create opportunities for mothers to connect with others in meaningful ways, contributing to the mother's resource pool by cultivating a sense of connectedness and meaning (Tierney et al., 2022). Such connections are crucial for achieving role enrichment through the mother-caregiver role (Beham et al., 2020). These invisible roles generate tangible contributions through the acquisition of knowledge, reinforcing maternal identity (Cheng & Lai, 2023; Home, 2008). Together, these studies highlight how caregiving cultivates a specific set of competencies, including organizational expertise, that transfer into professional or entrepreneurial domains (Casteleijn-Osorno, 2024; Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008). This opens space to reinterpret invisible roles as restorative avenues for agency and creative engagement (Sevgi & Ayran, 2024; Kumari et al., 2025).

The potential benefits of role enrichment operate through several interrelated mechanisms of transfer, starting with the direct spillover of skills. Caregiving and advocacy develop competencies such as leadership, negotiation, and networking (Chou et al., 2014; Kaplan et al., 2020), and as Esdaile (2009) observes, learning to value difference directly shapes entrepreneurial decision-making and innovation. Furthermore, hidden work contributes to psychological resources like confidence and a sense of accomplishment (Beham et al., 2020; Tierney et al., 2022). These resources are transferable across contexts, supporting motivation in both entrepreneurial and caregiving roles (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Finally, social capital acquired through participation in advocacy and peer-support networks provides both emotional sustenance and practical knowledge (Doğruel, 2025; Cheng & Lai, 2023). These networks offer resources that assist mother-caregivers in managing the demands of both family and business with greater confidence and are based on lived experiences. By linking role enrichment strictly to these mechanisms of resource spillover, caregiving is situated as a generative practice. As Heskiu and McCarthy (2021) argue, this transfer of skills and resources can paradoxically enhance autonomy, aligning with the core tenets of enrichment theory and underscoring how caregiving labour produces a toolbox of assets that mothers carry into economic domains.

2.4 Resilience Theory

Within the conceptual architecture of this study, resilience theory is explained as the analytical lens for understanding the dynamic process of adaptation under sustained adversity. While enrichment theory accounts for the generative spillover of resources, resilience theory is employed to explain how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigate the persistent, structural, and relational pressures inherent in their multiple roles. By framing resilience as a *process* rather than a static outcome, this dissertation focuses on the mechanics of survival and resistance within the unpredictable and challenging caregiving landscape.

Resilience is often colloquially viewed as a personal skill or the inherent capacity to overcome a particular challenge or trauma (Masten, 2018). However, as a theoretical concept, resilience is complex and multidimensional. Rather than being understood merely as an ingrained trait, it is viewed here as an ongoing process of navigating and adapting to adversity. Simply put, resilience refers to an individual's ability to recover, adapt, and continue engaging with life despite the effects of experiences that have caused physical and psychological distress (Southwick et al., 2014).

In relation to mothers of AN children adversity is understood as a chronic rather than an acute state. This aligns with van Breda's (2018, p. 5) definition of chronic adversity as a state that extends over a considerable period and has a pervasive impact on a person's life. This framing situates the discussion of resilience within the ongoing, sustained challenges faced by these mothers, highlighting the importance of considering both personal and contextual factors in understanding adaptive capacities. Resilience theory provides a valuable lens for interpreting how these mothers adapt to persistent caregiving demands, societal pressures, and systemic barriers.

Recent scholarship emphasizes that resilience is not an individually possessed trait but is cultivated through an ongoing dialogue between personal agency and external constraints (Ungar, 2011; Luthar et al., 2015). Within this framework, resilience is positioned as a form of resistance, a dynamic capacity to adapt and transform within contexts where caregiving and maternal identity are profoundly shaped by social expectations (Bozkur et al., 2022). By focusing on resilience as a process of adaptation, this study can interpret the *resilience tax* not as a failure on the part of the individual but as an inherent byproduct of the sustained effort required to remain resilient under structural neglect (see figure 4). This distinguishes the effort of resilience from the state of situated well-being, ensuring that the framework is used as a tool for explaining adaptation under adversity rather than as a final measure of well-being.

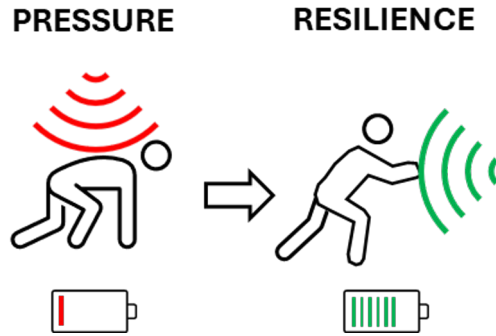


Figure 4. Resilience is about the ability to adapt and influence well-being in a positive way.

2.4.1 Resilience as Defiance of Normative Motherhood

Resilience theory, within the context of this dissertation, is mobilized to explain the dynamic process through which mothers of AN children navigate and resist the dominant deficit-laden narratives of societal discourse regarding additional needs. Empirical study consistently demonstrates that mothers of AN children experience elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms in comparison to mothers of neurotypical children (Hayes & Watson, 2013; Marquis et al., 2019; Mundakir et al., 2024). Within dominant societal discourses, these mothers themselves are frequently positioned as deficient or inadequately equipped, with some experiencing discrimination on behalf of their child, also known as ‘courtesy stigma’ (Green, 2003). Consequently, mothers are often portrayed as failing to embody idealized notions of motherhood (Klajmon-Lech, 2024) and, in some accounts, are positioned as inadequate as a mother/woman. To maintain analytical precision, resilience is framed here not as an inherent trait, but as a dynamic process of defiant resistance against these structural and social pressures.

Despite such deficit-laden framings and experienced challenges, many mothers actively defy and resist these narratives. These mothers construct their own practices of mothering beyond rigid cultural expectations within imposed constraints (Huang & Dong, 2024; Kibria & Becerra, 2021). The daily realities of raising an AN child, is often marked by social isolation, employment challenges, navigation of complex and contradictory structures aimed to ‘support’, and some form of stigma, which place extraordinary demands on mothers. At the same time, the reality of an AN child’s reliance on their mother for every aspect of safety and success fosters a compulsory resilience. This structural demand necessitates that mother-caregivers withstand chronic, ongoing pressures (Scherer et al., 2019), effectively framing resilience as a negotiated survival strategy rather than a voluntary choice. Through this resilience, many mothers find the strength to manage the simultaneous responsibilities (Güçlü &

Hürmeydan, 2024) of caregiving, family responsibilities, and professional or entrepreneurial work.

Rather than allowing a child's diagnosis to define their maternal identity or dictate their child's potential, some mothers work toward the acceptance of an additional need, constructing meaning from their experiences and affirming their child's individuality beyond labels (Salehian, 2022). In doing so, these mothers resist the societal impulse to pathologize their parenting or reduce their children to nothing more than a diagnosis. This form of defiant resilience functions as a dynamic adaptation, rejecting stigma, marginalization, and institutional barriers that undermine maternal legitimacy. Through sustained advocacy, emotional labour, and a refusal to conform to the dominant cultural narratives of what good mothering is, these mothers assert agency both for their children and themselves (Kibria & Becerra, 2021). Levine (2019) notes that in doing so, they challenge traditional narratives of maternal success by embodying a vision of motherhood rooted in care, authenticity, and adaptability rather than conformity. This defiance reconfigures normative family roles and fosters a collective resilience within families that centres on increasing dignity, empowerment, and enhancing well-being.

Resilience theory is especially striking when examining the experiences of mothers who do not fit societal ideals, such as mothers of AN children (Ryan and Runswick-Cole, 2008). While these women often confront various forms of stigma, they frequently mobilize unique forms of resilience, which draw upon embodied knowledge of vulnerability, empathy, and adaptation (Thomas, 2010; Malacrida, 2009) and apply them to other areas of their lives. For these mothers, resilience is not about replicating normative maternal roles but about reimagining them into something that can preserve and enhance their situated well-being. Some mothers engage in the cultivation of caregiving practices and self-care that prioritize interdependence and mutual support (Musyaropah et al., 2023; Souza et al., 2025), thereby extending resilience beyond the individual to their AN child.

Within entrepreneurial contexts, the adaptive capacities highlighted by resilience theory manifest as the ability to develop innovative business practices that incorporate care, flexibility, and inclusivity. Engagement in entrepreneurship provides mothers with opportunities to secure economic stability while simultaneously negotiating and redefining their roles in ways that intersect with broader social expectations, including ableist and gendered norms. In this way, the resilience cultivated through caregiving influences how mothers approach and shape their entrepreneurial endeavours. As the caregiver engages in this defiant positioning, they are more likely to experience an increased positive well-being and engage with others by including members of their community or child in their activities (Bekhet, 2023). Leaning into roles that provide well-being benefits allows the mother-caregiver to challenge assumptions about their role and position resilience as a positive influence on well-being maintained through defiance.

2.4.2 Resilience in Practice: Support in caregiving and entrepreneurship

Exhaustion from the caregiving role, known as caregiving burnout (Jyoti et al., 2023), can, by its nature, have a negative influence on maternal resilience. Each day, the lives of mothers with children with additional needs are shaped by a distinctive set of challenges that influence how mothers view and can handle caregiving responsibilities, professional trajectories, and social networks (Cardenas & Colwell, 2024; Tabatabai, 2019). Additionally, caregiving tasks structure the daily motherhood experience in deep yet frequently overlooked ways. Without the sharing of the caregiving role, mothers are engaged in a continuous negotiation between necessary obligations and personal goals, generating an invisible realm of labour isolating the mother-caregiver experience (Dillon-Wallace et al., 2014; Martire et al., 2000).

Despite these persistent pressures, many mothers cultivate resilience through adaptive coping strategies that include pursuing autonomous career paths such as entrepreneurship. For some, entrepreneurship arises as a financial necessity; for others, it is a deliberate and empowering response to structural constraints (Shir et al., 2019). In the context of chronic adversity, entrepreneurship may be approached in ways that align with the ongoing demands of caregiving. Mothers navigating these sustained challenges may develop enterprises that are responsive to the rhythms of family life, integrating care, flexibility, and emotional labour into business practices. Such ventures suggest that caregiving itself can serve as a productive and shaping force, influencing how entrepreneurial activity is organized and experienced, rather than being guided solely by conventional business logics (Vershina & McAdam, 2022).

Traditionally conceptualized within a masculine paradigm of autonomy, risk-taking, and rationality, entrepreneurship has long been perceived as incompatible with the relational and care-oriented dimensions of motherhood (Marlow, 2020). The rise of mompreneurs / mothering entrepreneurs reflects an emergent identity category that disrupts these assumptions, situating motherhood and entrepreneurship as concurrent and negotiated roles (Ekinsmyth, 2013; Mayes et al., 2020). Lewis (2010) argues that this identity should not be dismissed as trivial but recognized as a meaningful and gendered entrepreneurial pathway that expands the boundaries of who can engage in economic participation.

Entrepreneurship, in this context, can be understood as extending beyond purely economic engagement. It may offer mothers a means of navigating rigid labour markets, limited access to care, and the ongoing demands of family life, while maintaining involvement in their children's daily experiences. This form of entrepreneurial activity highlights how care and work can become deeply intertwined, suggesting a rethinking of conventional notions of productivity, success, and the entrepreneurial self in relation to sustained caregiving responsibilities.

2.5 Chapter Summary and Synthesis of Underexplored Areas

To address gaps in entrepreneurship scholarship, this chapter outlined the theoretical scaffolding where entrepreneurial activity and caregiving intersect. Drawing on the Feminist Ethics of Care as a foundational relational ontology, the study employs role enrichment theory and resilience theory as its primary analytical mechanisms to explain skill transfer and the emotional costs of persistence. This hierarchy enables a critical exploration of caregiving as a formative practice rather than an external variable. Within this framework, well-being is not viewed as a static individual attribute; instead, it is co-constructed, fluctuating as it is influenced by the emotions and relationships of others within the liminal, temporal spaces that emerge intermittently throughout life.

As Güçlü and Hürmeýdan (2024) emphasize, the intense demands of caregiving compel resilience, highlighting mothers' capacity not only to adapt but to maintain functioning and thrive under complex and unpredictable conditions. Within this framework, resilience emerges both as a coping strategy and as a deliberate form of resistance against stigma and institutional barriers (Kibria & Becerra, 2021), supporting meaning-making and the acceptance of a child's needs as sources of enrichment rather than limitation (Salehian, 2022).

Through sustained advocacy and "invisible work" (Williams & Murray, 2015; Aceves & Black, 2024; Roth & Faldet, 2020; Sousa, 2011), mothers become both experts and "hell-raisers" (Lo Bosco, 2021), challenging ableist structures (Lalvani & Hale, 2015) and societal expectations that question the legitimacy of these mothers (Schmidt et al., 2023). By challenging these structures and norms, mothers embody what Levine (2019) describes as a redefined vision of maternal success, prioritizing authenticity in caregiving over societal conformity. Adapting to challenges and engaging in advocacy can therefore be seen as positive measures taken to increase well-being and recover from the stressors relating to caregiving (Luthar et al., 2000). The synthesis of these frameworks underscores the need for negotiation of resources, coping strategies, and meaning-making processes used to shape maternal well-being in contexts of additional needs caregiving. Simultaneously, it highlights underexplored areas in literature, particularly the intersection of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and the lived experiences of mothers who perceive caregiving as both a challenge and a source of joy. By employing these integrative lenses, this study positions itself to extend entrepreneurship studies by foregrounding caregiving, well-being, and the silenced maternal voices. Figure 5 illustrates how these frameworks collectively inform the study.

Building on these integrative theoretical perspectives, the conceptual framework articulates the interplay of caregiving, resilience, enrichment, ethics of care, and well-being to guide the analysis of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs' lived experiences.

Together, these frameworks and concepts provide a multidimensional lens for examining how mother-entrepreneurs raising children with additional needs navigate caregiving and entrepreneurship. This includes, but is not limited to, how mothers construct meaning, face challenges, and experience everyday realities. By situating the study within these frameworks, this chapter illustrates how theory shapes the analysis and underscores the importance of integrating care, resilience, and well-being into entrepreneurship studies.

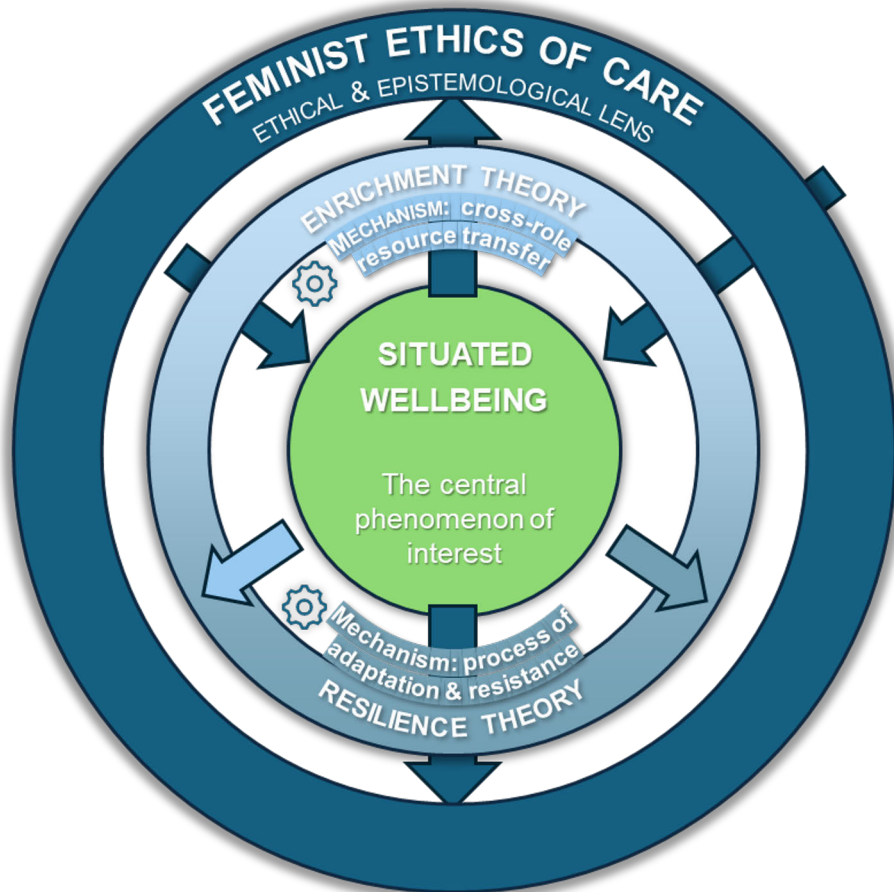


Figure 5. The Conceptual Architecture of the Study.

3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this study. Situated within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, the study adopts a qualitative design to explore the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. The theoretical frameworks and well-being as a lived experience guide the design, participant selection, and analytic approach, without predetermining the findings. Through this methodology, the study captures the nuanced, context-dependent lived realities of participants and allows for the emergence of new insights, including the concept of caregiving entrepreneurship, which is introduced in the findings. The following sections detail the study paradigm (3.1), study design (3.2), participant selection (3.3), data collection (3.4), and data analysis (3.5), followed by reflexivity, ethics, trustworthiness, limitations, and a chapter summary (3.6 – 3.8).

3.1 Paradigmatic and Epistemological Framing

Central to this study is the aim of deepening the understanding of the lived realities of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. In order to do so, understanding and identifying both the challenges mothers face and the areas of enrichment that emerge from the caregiving experience and other roles is key. As a researcher whose background closely aligns with that of the participants, I approached the study with the stance that the relationships with my participants should be built on trust and shared experiences on this sensitive topic and should be co-constructed rather than extracted (Bell, 2013; Patti and Ellis, 2017). This position was crucial, as I viewed participants as active equals with valuable insights to share, whose autonomy and voices needed to be respected throughout the process, and whose experiences in caregiving would perhaps be an emotional one. Indeed, as Pittaway et al. (2010) remind us, study participants cannot be assumed to share a common understanding of the purpose of study. Accordingly, this study aimed to create conditions that supported genuine interaction and participation. Providing clear, transparent information and inviting participants to engage as active contributors ensured that their voices carried meaning both for me and for the study as a whole.

From a hermeneutic perspective, this approach recognizes that meaning is not uncovered in isolation but is co-constructed through dialogue, interpretive

engagement, and the collaborative interaction between researcher and participant. Accordingly, this study is situated within a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm, guided by a hermeneutic orientation that positions lived experiences as accessible through an interpretive process rather than objective measurement (Tanlaka & Aryal, 2025). This paradigm recognizes that experiences are inherently embedded within broader societal structures and, for the participants in this study, are deeply shaped by their relationships and even cultural expectations (Wiliam, 2024). This hermeneutic stance finds its epistemological rationale in a feminist ethics of care, which serves as an interpretive orientation that values relationality and the significance of dependency. By explicitly aligning these perspectives, the study moves beyond a generic description of lived experience to a morally salient interpretation of what counts as significant.

Analysis is grounded in Ricoeur’s phenomenological hermeneutic theory (Van Manen, 2017), allowing the study not merely to describe experiences but to uncover the layered, interpretive dimensions of how participants perceive, construct, and narrate their well-being within the intersecting demands of caregiving and entrepreneurship. By solidifying well-being as the central phenomenon of interest, the study ensures that related concepts such as resilience and joy are analysed as mechanisms that influence this central state. Epistemologically, this stance recognises that the researcher is an active participant in the construction of knowledge. Reflexivity is central, as my positionality as a mother, scholar, and facilitator can desensitize me to the nuances of participants’ narratives and therefore requires attentive engagement and bracketing of assumptions (Karcher et al., 2024). Mentioning positionality here signals the lens through which the data was approached, with a more detailed reflection on my role and influence presented in the Researcher Positionality section (3.7) later in the chapter.

This approach was selected to guide this work as hermeneutics provides a way of moving beyond surface-level accounts to engage deeply with participants’ narratives, attending to the unique interplay between established roles (Parsons, 2010). This approach is, therefore, particularly well-suited to uncovering the subtle yet complex and underexplored areas in a mother-caregiver-entrepreneur experience, such as well-being, joy, resilience, and enrichment intertwined within the lives of these mothers. In adopting Ricoeur’s logic of configuration, and in the use of Lego Serious Play and Photovoice in conjunction with a Hermeneutic Phenomenology (LSP-PV-HP), the archiving of these ephemeral narratives transform into tangible artifacts. The strength, therefore, in this approach lies in illuminating not just meaning and context, but deep emotions, thereby opening space for new conceptual insights to emerge in the area of caregiving and entrepreneurship. Finally, this orientation is supported by the study’s theoretical framework, illustrated in Table 1, which highlights the distinction between explanatory theories and the overarching phenomenon of well-being.

Table 1. Integrative Research Design: The Hierarchical Alignment of Paradigm, Theory, and Focal Phenomenon.

Research Component	Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	Analytical Role and Function
Philosophical Orientation	Constructivist Interpretivism	Knowledge is co-constructed between the researcher and participants. This paradigm facilitates the use of LSP-PV-HP as a tool for materializing and stabilizing subjective realities.
Methodological Stance	Hermeneutic Phenomenology	Guided by Ricoeur's logic of configuration, this lens focuses on interpreting lived experiences, emphasizing the meaning-making process and the narrative stabilization of ephemeral data.
Ethical & Epistemological Lens	Feminist Ethics of Care	Acts as the normative-interpretive orientation. It situates care labour as a generative site of relationality and responsibility, providing the rationale for valuing dependency and vulnerability within the data.
Explanatory Social Theory	Enrichment Theory	Utilized strictly to explain cross-role resource transfer, identifying how competencies and affective gains from caregiving spill over into and enhance entrepreneurial activity.
Explanatory Social Theory	Resilience Theory	Explores the dynamic process of adaptation under adversity. In this study, it serves to explain how functioning is sustained, acknowledging that joy can coexist with the costly labour of navigating hardship.
Focal Phenomenon	Well-being	The central phenomenon guiding the study. It demonstrates how mothers construct meaning and cultivate flourishing within caregiving contexts, resisting deficit-based narratives through the lens of lived experience.

* Created by the author

The architecture of the research design, as illustrated in Table 1, delineates a clear conceptual hierarchy that distinguishes between ethical orientation, explanatory social theory, and the central phenomenon under investigation. By positioning the Feminist ethics of care as the overarching epistemological lens, the study establishes the normative values that inform the Hermeneutic interpretation of the data. This structure assigns enrichment and resilience to specific explanatory roles, with the former addressing cross-role resource transfer and the latter focusing on the adaptive processes of navigating adversity. In this manner, it ensures analytical precision. Centrally, well-being is stabilized as the main focal phenomenon of interest, serving as the analytical anchor for the study. This layered approach ensures that the

methodology functions as a coherent system, where each component is curated to investigate how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs cultivate flourishing amidst complex intersecting demands.

3.2 Study Design

This study includes five articles, three empirical and two conceptual, outlined in Table 5, which summarizes the study design of the articles presented.

Phenomenology is in particular well-suited to investigating the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs as it allows for an understanding of how individuals perceive, interpret, and make meaning out of their daily experienced realities (van Manen, 2016; Grondin, 2017). The purpose of a phenomenological design, therefore, is to uncover the very essence of mother-caregiver-entrepreneur lived experiences, illuminating how areas such as well-being, resilience, and maternal agency intersect and are experienced. Additionally, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, this study design was paramount in capturing the nuances relating to the motherhood-caregiving-entrepreneurship experience that remain underexplored in existing studies.

The interpretive orientation of this study aligns with a constructivist paradigm and draws specifically on hermeneutic phenomenology. Here, understanding the meaning of well-being is seen as a dynamic and iterative process, informed by Heidegger's concept of the Hermeneutic Circle, later refined by Gadamer (2004). This principle suggests that we can only grasp the whole by engaging with each part, starting by reflecting on our pre-understood experiences and biases rooted in cultural and historical situations to interpret our lived experiences of today (Grondin, 2017). In this study, this means acknowledging that both participants and researchers bring perspectives rooted in our histories and languages that shape our meaning-making. Only then, in this acknowledgement, can we allow for new interpretations and experiences to emerge from our co-created dialogue.

This approach is further supported by van Manen's (2016) emphasis on phenomenology as a reflective practice. This reflexivity is driven by the desire to seek meaning through attentive engagement with lived experiences and by utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) emphasizes the double hermeneutic process, wherein participants interpret and make sense of their own experiences, while the researcher simultaneously interprets this sense-making, resulting in a collaboratively constructed understanding (Smith et al., 2009).

Building on this foundation, the next section outlines the selection of participants, detailing how participants were identified, recruited, and ultimately chosen to ensure ethically informed and contextually grounded insights into the lived experiences of mothers navigating both caregiving and entrepreneurial roles. Each article included in

this study has played an instrumental role in uncovering the complexities of mothers' multiple roles. The insights are organized and guided by the study design outlined in Table 3, which details the articles and the methods applied.

3.3 Participant Selection and Recruitment

This study employed purposive sampling to identify participants whose lived experiences directly aligned with the central focal phenomenon of well-being within the caregiving-entrepreneurial intersection. Eligible participants were mothers who identified as the primary caregivers for one or more AN child, and as entrepreneurs. Recruitment was conducted through a comprehensive search across online forums, caregiving associations, and relevant agencies, and was significantly enhanced by relational snowball sampling. This strategy was particularly effective in building the trust necessary for deep phenomenological disclosure, with a blog maintained by one participant acting as a key catalyst for word-of-mouth referrals.

Initially, nine participants aged 39–57 were recruited, reflecting a cross-national composition with seven based in the United Kingdom and two in Finland. This geographic diversity this cross-national composition was an incidental result of the recruitment networks rather than a formal comparative objective. The children's ages ranged from 7 to 20 years, providing a wide temporal lens on caregiving demands and resource allocation. Baseline data regarding child age and marital status were recorded at the study's inception in 2023 to identify potential influences on participant narratives.

Over the course of this four-year longitudinal study, the sample underwent a natural attrition typical of research involving high-pressure caregiving roles. Approximately two years into the process, four participants became unavailable due to returning to traditional employment or intensifying time constraints. The remaining core group of five participants, four in the United Kingdom and one in Finland continued to provide the in-depth, longitudinal insights required for the study's subsequent phases. This shift in sample size allowed for a more concentrated hermeneutic engagement, where the reduced number of participants facilitated a deeper, more iterative analysis of the total picture generated through the multimodal and art-based methods.

All participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and protect their identities throughout the study. Participants' details are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of participants*.

Participant number and pseudonym	Age of the mother in 2023	Articles in which participants were interviewed	Age of additional needs child(ren) in 2023	Additional need of child	Marital Status
(1) Freya	46	I, IV, V	14	Pathological demand avoidance (PDA), Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Divorced, remarried
(2) Juni	45	I, IV, V	14, 17	High Functioning Autism, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, and Separation Anxiety Disorder.	Divorced, remarried
(3) May	45	I, V	16	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD	Divorced, remarried
(4) Lucy	41	I, IV, V	10, 8	Verbal dyspraxia, Gross motor skills disability, sensory issues relating to foods, textures, and sounds	Divorced
(5) Sally	46	I, IV, V	18, 17, 15, 14, 12	Autism, generalised anxiety disorder, dyslexia, Irlens Syndrome, ADHD, Anxiety disorder, tic disorder, PTSD	Married to the father of children
(6) Kit	41	I, IV, V	15, 7	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	Married to the father of children
(7) Raven	39	I	8	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD	Married to the father of the child
(8) Alice	41	I	7	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	Married to the father of the child
(9) Maggie	57	I, V	20	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD	Married to the father of the child

* Created by the author

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using art-based participatory methods, Lego® Serious Play®, and Photovoice, which was designed to capture the rich, contextually embedded experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. The primary method was semi-structured interviews combined with these art-based participatory methods, which allowed participants to share their experiences based on a posed study question in

their own words. This enabled the researcher to gently inquire for further meaning through careful, informed questioning (Brayda and Boyce, 2014). It was essential to maintain reflexivity in the questioning, ensuring the participants understood the language and context in order to capture nuanced emotions, which aid in understanding the lived experiences of the participants. Semi-structured interviews are particularly suited to exploring lived experience, as they provide insight into participants' perspectives, emotions, and co-creation in the meaning-making processes, provided the participants feel psychologically safe (Melville and Hincks, 2016). Lego® Serious Play (LSP) and Photovoice allows participants to convey complex, emotionally charged experiences, though familiarity with these visual and symbolic methods varied. Some participants were experienced with playing with Legos®, while others adapted quickly despite no prior exposure. These methods were deliberately chosen to engage participants with sensitive topics, enabling expression of experiences that might be difficult to articulate through direct questioning, and proved effective throughout the interviews.

3.4.1 LEGO® Serious Play (LSP)

As a certified LEGO® Serious Play (LSP) facilitator since 2018 and member of the Association of Master Trainers, the decision to use LSP for this study was a clear choice due to what I have experienced regarding its reflective nature, which allows for the uncovering of deep emotional meanings co-constructed with the participants. Inspired by a doctoral colleague at a conference who utilized another art-based method (the drawing of narratives), the idea to employ LSP emerged. LSP was subsequently selected after careful consideration regarding the most suitable method, which would facilitate the type of deep and nuanced understanding of sensitive and complex experiences that participants might find challenging to articulate verbally (Tumanyan & Huuki, 2020).

LSP enables participants to construct tangible, metaphorical representations of abstract concepts, such as their perceptions of well-being within their multiple roles, transforming them into accessible LEGO® models (Kriszan & Nienaber, 2024). This method aligns with the study's phenomenological and constructivist orientation, emphasizing the co-construction of knowledge and reflective engagement between participant and researcher/facilitator. A key reason for using this method was the psychological safety it afforded, allowing participants to explore sensitive topics indirectly rather than through direct questioning or conventional interviews (Fernández-Alcántara et al., 2017).

3.4.1.1 LSP Procedures

The LSP method consists of four steps: (1) Question, (2) Construction, (3) Share, and (4) Reflection (Hayes & Graham, 2019). In contrast to traditional LSP workshops, each interview in this study was conducted individually, with participants engaging in LEGO® model building in safe and familiar environments, such as their home or office. The stages of an LSP workshop are illustrated in Table 3.

Before the main activity, constructing a model representing well-being, participants completed a warm-up exercise, constructing a simple LEGO® dinosaur model instead of the traditional duck sample model (Roos & Victor, 2018). This exercise familiarized participants with the materials, encouraged creative thinking, and fostered psychological safety within the workshop space and with the researcher. During this stage, participants were free to ask questions and engage in playful banter, easing initial anxieties and preparing them for the deeper reflective and narrative task ahead.

The main LSP activity involved constructing a model in response to the central study question: “What does well-being mean to you?” Participants were encouraged to use as many LEGO® bricks as needed to build a response. Two modifications were made to the traditional LSP method for this study:

1. Custom LEGO® Kits: Kits were created from a 5 kg box of bricks, matching the LSP® ‘Starter Kit’ of 234 pieces, as identified in the facilitator handbook.
2. Augmented Accessories: The kit included additional accessories such as a witch’s hat, bat, broom, briefcase, banana, magnifying glass, lipstick, crossbow, shoe, cherries, carrot, monkey, shark, glass, money, cat, crown, fags, helmet, sword, and coffee mug. These visual vocabulary pieces or metaphoric materials offered participants expressive freedom using familiar objects relevant to everyday life (Wengel, 2019). Other items, such as animals, weapons, and costumes, were excluded as they were not considered representative of participants’ daily experiences.

After constructing their models, the facilitator asked questions only about the model itself, including colours and elements chosen, allowing participants’ narratives to emerge through natural dialogue. Participants assigned meaning to their constructed models, reflecting on how individual LEGO® bricks, colours, and symbols related to their lived experiences of well-being, caregiving, and entrepreneurship. This integration of model building and narrative reflection enabled participants to externalize complex and sensitive experiences that might have been difficult to express in traditional interviews.

Table 3. Stages and description of the LEGO® Serious Play interview*.

Stage	Purpose / Description	References
Warm-up Exercise	Participants construct a simple LEGO® dinosaur model to familiarize themselves with bricks, encourage creativity, and foster psychological safety ¹ . Open questioning and playful banter help ease initial anxieties.	Roos & Victor, 2018
Step 1: Question	Introduce the central study question: "What does well-being mean to you?" Participants consider their experiences before building.	Hayes & Graham, 2019
Step 2: Construction	Participants construct LEGO® models responding to the question, using as many bricks as needed.	Hayes & Graham, 2019
Step 3: Share / Dialogue	The facilitator asks questions only about the model itself (colours, elements), allowing participants' narratives to emerge naturally ²	Hayes & Graham, 2019
Step 4: Reflection	Participants assign meaning to bricks, colours, and symbols; reflect on their experiences of well-being, caregiving, and entrepreneurship.	Hayes & Graham, 2019
Modifications to the LSP Method	1) Custom LEGO® kits of 234 pieces (Starter Kit). 2) Augmented kit with metaphoric materials (witch's hat, bat, briefcase, banana, etc.) to provide expressive freedom with familiar objects.	Wengel, 2019

1) Individual sessions conducted in participants' homes or offices to enhance psychological safety:

2) Adaptation for sensitive topics contributes a novel methodological approach (White et al., 2022); *

Created by the author

3.4.1.2 Ethical and Methodological Considerations

By adapting LSP for individual sessions, this study preserved participant psychological safety while contributing a novel methodological approach for exploring highly personal and emotionally charged topics. This approach demonstrates the potential of LSP as a flexible and insightful tool within qualitative study, particularly for eliciting rich, personal insights while maintaining participant comfort and emotional safety.

3.4.2 Photovoice

The second art-based method chosen was the Photovoice method, a participatory, visual study approach that enables participants to document and critically reflect on their lived experiences through photography, fostering both expression and empowerment (Wang et al., 1997). For this study, mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs engaged in Photovoice, guided by a series of questions, to capture aspects of their daily lives, including:

1. Caregiving routines.
2. Meaning of joy.
3. Societal Implications

Photovoice allowed participants to express experiences that might be difficult to convey through interviews alone, once again allowing for the co-creation of their own narratives. This approach aligns with the study's constructivist–interpretivist paradigm, emphasizing co-construction of knowledge, participant agency, and interpretation of lived experiences within social and cultural contexts. Participants received guidance on ethical photography, including:

1. Avoiding identifiable images of others without consent.
2. Ensuring only their own children were photographed.

They were also instructed on aligning photographs with the posed questions and participated in scheduled follow-up sessions to discuss their images. Participants were given four weeks to complete their Photovoice project; see Appendix 1 for questions posed during the Photovoice interview.

3.4.2.1 Theoretical and Ethical Alignment

Photovoice operates as a participatory action research tool that integrates documentary photography to enable participants to express their lived experiences and perspectives (Strack et al., 2022). This method emphasizes reflexivity, guiding participants to engage with study questions through an empathic lens that captures the everyday realities of their lives (Van Orne et al., 2024), in this case, the intersection of caregiving and entrepreneurship. By positioning participants not merely as passive subjects, but as co-creators of their own narratives, the method ensures that lived experiences are recognized as central to the meaning-making process (Malka et al., 2024). As originally conceptualized by Wang and Burris (1994), photovoice “uses people’s photographic documentation of their everyday lives as an educational tool to record and to reflect their needs, promote dialogue, encourage action, and inform policy” (pp. 369–370), thereby “including new voices in policy discussions by facilitating collective learning, expression, and action” (p. 370).

The principles of Photovoice support participant engagement, inclusion, and access to personal dimensions of experience, allowing layered emotional realities to emerge (Burlles & Thomas, 2014; Eisner, 2008). This methodology facilitates the co-construction of nuanced and authentic themes through participants’ visual contributions and in their own time (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018).

The method also incorporates narrative distance, offering psychological safety that allows participants to engage with emotional topics without direct vulnerability. Traditionally, Photovoice equips participants, initially from marginalized communities, with cameras to document their experiences, promoting awareness, social change, and dialogue with policymakers (Anderson et al., 2023; Hoyle et al.,

2024). Due to technological advances, participants were advised to use their own embedded cameras within their mobile phones. Therefore, while Photovoice is not explicitly grounded in Feminist Ethics of Care, it aligns with its principles by amplifying the voices of communities that may otherwise have limited capacity to influence decisions.

3.4.2.2 Implementation in This Study

Participants shared photos individually via email or WhatsApp, which the researcher printed and discussed in one-on-one, face-to-face sessions rather than traditional group settings (Kamila et al., 2024). Collective storytelling emerged through analysis of individual photographs alongside each participant, allowing personalized narratives to be revealed without exploratory questioning by the researcher.

Participants selected and shared photos to experience the emotion behind each image without my influence, enabling raw, powerful narratives to unfold organically and without the researcher questioning the meaning behind each photo.

A notable adaptation was that two participants used full or partial digital stock photos instead of taking original photographs. For one, this allowed a dedicated amount of time to complete the task (2 hours) that she could put aside and schedule; for the other, stock images captured moments with her son from up to 15 years prior, relevant to her narrative, and unable to be captured in real-time photography (Foster et al., 2023). These adaptations demonstrate Photovoice's empowering flexibility for participants to articulate lived experiences through their own visual and narrative lenses, regardless of location, time, or space (Wang et al., 1997).

Although four questions were posed, only the five photos from one question: *as a parent of a child with a disability, what are the greatest joys you experience?* was used in this study. All questions are provided in Appendix 1.

3.4.2.3 Supplementary Methods

Participant observation was an integral part of the data collection and analysis process. During the Lego Serious Play and Photovoice sessions, I closely noted participants' emotions, gestures, and subtle expressions such as sighs or moments of hesitation, while ensuring that only their own children were photographed. Throughout all sessions, I maintained a reflective diary, recording observations, thoughts, and impressions before, during, and after each meeting. Non-verbal communication captured on recordings, such as expressions of frustration or shifts in posture, was also systematically annotated in the transcripts, allowing me to attend to layers of meaning beyond the spoken word. This combination of observation, reflective note-taking, and attention to non-verbal cues enriched the analysis, providing a deeper understanding

of how participants enacted and expressed their experiences, and supporting the interpretive, constructivist approach of the study.

3.4.2.4 Data Collection Procedure

For both methods, data collection occurred over two years, 2023-2024, with sessions in the United Kingdom and Finland to accommodate participants' caregiving and work schedules. Interviews lasted on average 60–90 minutes, with Photovoice sessions typically longer than LSP sessions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim using Otter.AI (USA), and reflective notes were kept in diaries to ensure validity and ethical compliance.

Recruiting and interviewing mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs presented several challenges, particularly in identifying suitable participants and coordinating in-person meetings, especially for those residing abroad. Conducting study as an insider required flexibility and sensitivity to participants' complex schedules, particularly for those based in the United Kingdom. Interviews were often embedded within their daily routines, taking place over many cups of coffee, lunches, or during brief pauses in otherwise busy days. Participants described these moments not only as opportunities for reflection but also as rare breaks from the demands of caregiving and entrepreneurship and expressed feeling pride at being included in this study.

My engagement with participants extended beyond formal interviews. Spending time in their homes, with their partners, children, and pets, sharing meals, attending events as a guest, interacting with their business contacts/community, and engaging in extended, informal conversations over multiple beverages provided invaluable insight into the complexity and richness of their daily lives. Over the course of the study, these interactions positioned me as a trusted, present, and attentive participant in their experiences. This enabled us to create the relational trust in which participants made space for me within their lives and valued the time devoted to the study. This relational dimension of data collection was central to capturing the depth and nuance of their lived experiences, reflecting the interpretive, constructivist approach underpinning this study.

This combination of methods provided a holistic and nuanced understanding of how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigate their multifaceted roles, capturing both verbalized experiences and embodied, metaphorical representations of their realities.

3.5 Data Analysis

For articles, I, IV, and V, data were analysed using a hermeneutic constructivist approach and/or IPA, emphasizing interpretation and meaning-making within participants' lived experiences and within this context. Phenomenology as an

umbrella analysis method provides an ontological basis for an interpretive approach, be that IPA or applying a hermeneutic phenomenological lens. As Heidegger (1976, p. 60) explains, phenomenology studies the ‘Being of entities’ and makes ontology possible, focusing not on what is immediately visible but on phenomena that remain hidden or obscured. Much of the uncovered meaning behind each of the interviews with the participants falls under the hidden or obscured title. Therefore, understanding, as Gadamer (2004) notes, is first a mode of being before it is a mode of knowing, highlighting the interpretive nature of the lived experience. This aligns with Butler’s (1998) hermeneutic approach, emphasizing the importance of interpreting context-dependent, nuanced experiences, which, as I identified, are central to this study of mother-entrepreneurs navigating caregiving and entrepreneurial roles primarily as their roles enrich and influence one another.

In articles I and IV, analysis was conducted through a hermeneutic constructivist lens, aligning with Lego® Serious Play’s (LSP) theoretical underpinnings (Kanagaratnam, 2023). This approach aimed to understand the well-being meaning represented in participants’ models guided by supportive questioning and their own critical introspection. Dimensions and/or themes in response to the study question were distilled from the transcripts and notes using an iterative approach. For article V, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006) guided the detailed exploration of participants’ subjective experiences and meaning-making processes, where the Photovoice method was used. This offered a structured and rigorous approach to both textual and visual data.

Together, IPA, a hermeneutic constructivist lens, and the three theoretical lenses, resilience theory, enrichment theory, and feminist ethics of care, provided a comprehensive framework to interpret participants’ experiences of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being using art-based methods, with more details on these methods illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparative Table: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) vs. Hermeneutic Phenomenology*.

	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Article V	Hermeneutic Phenomenology Articles I and IV	Hermeneutic Lens (Analytical Orientation)
Ontological Assumption	Experience is subjective and individually constructed	Being is always situated in context; experience reveals being-in-the-world.	Reality is mediated through language and culture; meanings are layered and socially constructed.
Epistemological Position	Knowledge is co-constructed between the participant and researcher.	Knowledge emerges through reflection on lived experience.	Knowledge is contextual, interpretive, and tied to power, discourse, and language.
Primary Focus	Understanding how individuals make sense of personal lived experiences.	Uncovering the essence and meaning of lived experience.	Interpreting how meaning, identity, and ideology are constructed through text, images, and discourse.
Nature of Interpretation	Double hermeneutic: The researcher interprets how the participant makes sense of their experience.	Deep, reflective interpretation of existential meaning.	Multi-layered interpretation of symbolic, cultural, and linguistic context.
Role of Researcher	Reflexive interpreter of individual meaning.	Co-constructor and reflective interpreter of meaning.	Analytical interpreter, interrogating assumptions, positioning, and cultural context.
Role of Participant	Central meaning-maker of their experience.	Embodied being whose lived story expresses essential meaning.	Speaker/creator of situated meaning; subject to discursive structures.
Emphasis in Data	Individual narratives, semi-structured interviews, metaphors.	Rich descriptions, life stories, personal texts.	Any text or symbol-laden material (e.g., interviews, policy, imagery, media).
Analytic Process	Identify emergent themes ideographically, then compare across cases.	Reflective writing: focus on experiential depth and existential themes.	Thematic and critical reading of latent meaning, symbolic language, and discourse.

* Created by the author

3.5.1 Hermeneutic Interpretivist Lens applied for LSP data analysis

A hermeneutic interpretivist lens guided the analysis for Articles I and IV through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) process, structured around eight interrelated stages that ensured depth, reflexivity, and contextual grounding of participants' narratives and visual data. The analysis began with immersion: reading and re-reading transcripts alongside audio recordings to correct errors, capture nuances in language, and re-experience participants' voices. Reflective diaries and notes written before, during, and after interviews were also consulted to situate each narrative within broader personal and contextual frameworks.

Exploratory noting followed, with colour-coded annotations highlighting descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual elements. Particular attention was given to emotionally salient moments—pauses, sighs, or shifts in tone—as well as language choices and recurring terms such as well-being, stigma, caregiving, and entrepreneurship. Photographs of the LEGO® models were placed alongside transcripts, allowing connections between spoken narratives, visual expressions, and embodied emotions to emerge.

From these notes, initial ideas were rephrased into concise phrases that captured both participants' meaning-making and my interpretative lens as a researcher. This process was tactile and iterative: phrases were physically cut into sentences, spread across tables and floors, and moved around to test different thematic configurations. This material engagement facilitated clustering of related themes, enabling the emergence of superordinate themes while maintaining a clear chain of evidence to original accounts. One illustrative example came from a participant who reflected:

“Where I am from, people want to conform, and I wanted to wear hats from a very, very young age, yet I was always mocked for it.”

In analysing this, I pictured a teenage girl yearning for independence and freedom of expression, struggling against familial and societal constraints. Sitting before me years later, she proudly wore a hat and cape, radiating enviable confidence and defiance. This juxtaposition of past vulnerability with present empowerment informed the dimension/theme: empowerment, independence, and fulfilment, with sub-dimensions - recognising pride and strength in overcoming childhood challenges rooted in neurodiversity stigma and embracing freedom in choosing meaningful connections that empower others.

Emergent themes were refined through iterative analysis, moving beyond descriptive content toward interpretative depth, particularly around caregiving roles, well-being experiences, and intersections of maternal and professional identities. Emotional layers and broader social and gendered contexts were incorporated, with

LEGO® visual models enriching interpretation. Themes were then organized into main and subthemes, guided by three theoretical lenses: Feminist Ethics of Care, emphasising relationality, responsibility, and embeddedness; Resilience, highlighting adaptation and strength in the face of sustained demands; and Enrichment, pointing to positive spillover and skill transfer across caregiving and entrepreneurial domains.

To preserve the idiographic commitment of the method, each case was analysed individually, with earlier interpretations bracketed before moving to the next participant (Holroyd, 2007). Cross-case analysis then identified convergences and divergences, showing how well-being and role enrichment or detriment were shaped by caregiving, entrepreneurship, and social expectations. Defining dimensions and themes followed once shared patterns were evident. The themes identified through each of the individual studies were uncovered as dimensions of well-being: Internal Conflict and Self-Neglect; Empowerment, Independence, and Fulfilment; and Resilient Control: Keeping the Balance. In the follow-up study, conducted one year after our initial meeting, three new dimensions emerged, reflecting the evolution of well-being over a year under caregiving and entrepreneurial conditions: Boundary Setting; Self-Prioritization and Care; and Growth and Acceptance.

Throughout, reflexivity remained central. My interpretations were continuously tested against participants' intentions and experiences, drawing on visual and narrative co-construction (Kanagaratnam, 2023). This reflexive stance honoured participants' voices while acknowledging my interpretative role, ensuring that the analysis captured the complexity of how caregiving and entrepreneurial identities intersect in shaping women's experiences of well-being.

3.5.2 IPA applied for analysis of Photovoice data

Visual data, including participant photographs and selected stock images, were analysed in conjunction with interview transcripts to provide a rich, multi-layered understanding of participants' lived experiences for article V. Each visual artifact was positioned alongside relevant transcript excerpts and reflective notes, allowing the images to be interpreted as expressive extensions of participants' narratives and revealing emotional, symbolic, and performative dimensions of their experiences.

The analysis began with an exploratory review of each image, attending to thematic and affective elements such as colour, composition, and relational arrangements. Captions and participant reflections provided crucial contextual cues, situating the photos within deeply personal and often emotionally charged narratives. For example, one participant's image of a half-deflated heart-shaped balloon was accompanied by her reflection that the love for a child with additional needs is given with one's full heart, yet it is also a love that can break you and slowly wear you down. Revisiting interviews and transcripts in dialogue with the visual material ensured that interpretations remained grounded in participants' lived experiences and meaning-

making processes. Visual data were coded iteratively alongside textual data, with both contributing to the identification of emergent themes through IPA. The heart-shaped balloon, for instance, came to represent a universal sentiment echoed across participants' accounts, that this love, for your child even with all their challenges, is a love that simultaneously breaks and sustains. Each photograph or stock image was therefore linked to the theme it most vividly expressed, capturing the emotional, symbolic, and performative dimensions of joy.

Patterns across visual data were explored across participants, identifying both shared symbolic motifs and divergent strategies. In cases where participants used digital stock photos, these were treated as meaningful adaptations, reflecting individual circumstances and methodological flexibility that respected participant preferences and comfort.

Throughout the analysis, reflexivity was central. Interpretations were conducted with careful attention to participants' intentions, ensuring alignment with the principles of visual methods and co-constructed meaning. This approach allowed for a nuanced, participant-centred understanding of how visual and verbal data together reveal the complexity of well-being in the lives of mother-entrepreneurs caring for children with additional needs.

This integrative visual-textual analysis ensured that both verbal, nonverbal (sighs, gestures, and pauses), and visual data were interpreted through IPA and hermeneutic lenses, with explicit attention to resilience, enrichment, and feminist ethics of care. Throughout the analysis, I maintained sustained reflexivity with the data, including taking into consideration my positionality and interpretive choices. This was maintained throughout the processes to ensure transparency, rigor, and trustworthiness.

3.6 Reflexivity and Theoretical Grounding

My role in this study is defined as a facilitator-researcher, a position that explicitly embodies the Feminist Ethics of Care through an active commitment to relationality and mutual vulnerability. Rather than maintaining a detached, objective distance, I inhabit a shared ontological space with the participants, grounded in our common identities as mothers and caregivers. Positioned as both a mother of children with additional needs and a researcher, I occupy the dual role of an insider. My lived experiences do not serve merely as contextual background; rather, they actively inform the questions I posed to myself and, subsequently, to my participants. This positionality shapes not only how I interpret narratives but also the ethical commitments I embrace throughout the study process. Often described as an insider researcher, this dual identity has enabled me to access nuanced, lived insights that might otherwise remain obscured (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Simultaneously, it demands ongoing reflexivity to maintain a balance between empathetic engagement

and critical analytical distance, while fostering trust grounded in shared experience (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Although I have been cautioned on more than one occasion that I was ‘too close’ to my topic, I maintain that my proximity enriches understanding of both participants’ lived realities and my own positionality as a researcher (Goundar, 2025). Without this closeness to the topic, I fully believe I would not have obtained such rich data and closeness with my participants, which was proven paramount to the study.

However, occupying the dual role of researcher and mother-caregiver-entrepreneur meant that my position in this study was never neutral. While my own experiences provided an entry point into the participants’ world, they also created moments of tension and distance. It was not always easy to relate to the narratives that unfolded before me. At times, I struggled with my own biases in understanding how some mothers chose to operate within their families, especially when their decisions conflicted with the values or strategies I personally relied on in my own caregiving and entrepreneurial life. These moments of dissonance were unsettling; I sometimes found my personal feelings overwhelming, and after the interviews felt the need to note such feelings and struggles down carefully as not to affect any of the data collected.

Such struggles underscored the challenges of balancing empathy with critical distance. My dual position forced me to confront the temptation of over-identification on one hand and judgment on the other. There were times when I instinctively wanted to “correct” or question choices I might not have made, revealing the pull of my own lived experience into the interpretive process. Acknowledging these reactions became part of the reflexive work: I deliberately paused, documented such moments in my reflective diary, and returned to the transcripts later with a clearer, more deliberate commitment to hear the participants on their own terms.

Over time, this reflexive practice helped me transform these struggles into analytical insights. My moments of discomfort became signals to look more carefully at the underlying social, cultural, or structural forces shaping mothers’ decisions rather than attributing them to personal choice alone. Instead of resisting difference, I learned to value it as a space of learning. The process was not always easy. Navigating between my insider perspective as a mother and outsider perspective as a researcher required ongoing negotiation. Yet, this very tension deepened the interpretative process, reminding me that IPA is not about reaching “pure” objectivity, but about situating meaning within the interplay of participant voices, researcher interpretations, and broader contexts.

Ultimately, embracing the difficulty of my dual role allowed me to move beyond either empathy or critique in isolation. I was able to hold both: to acknowledge resonance when participants’ struggles mirrored my own, and to respect divergence when their choices challenged me. This oscillation, although sometimes unsettling,

sometimes illuminating, became central to how I approached and understood the narratives of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs.

Additionally, following hermeneutic phenomenology, my role is not to extract “objective” truths but to co-construct meaning through dialogue and interpretation. Phenomenology provides an ontological foundation for this interpretive approach with a layered reflexivity practiced throughout the study process, including journaling, peer debriefing, note-taking, and returning to the data repeatedly with fresh eyes, allowing for careful reflection on my own biases. My positionality shaped not only how I framed questions but also how participants responded, often with a level of openness emerging from our shared understanding. Far from representing a methodological bias, this insider stance constitutes a methodological asset, particularly when exploring sensitive and emotionally laden experiences such as caregiving and entrepreneurial identity. Utilizing art-based methods further enhanced participatory inquiry, creating alternative modes of expression and dialogue, enabling participants to convey complex aspects of their lived experiences that might be difficult to articulate through traditional verbal methods alone (Leavy, 2015).

3.6.1 Ethical Considerations, Consent, and Confidentiality

This section outlines the ethical principles and protocols followed throughout the study, ensuring the protection of each participant's identification and interview data. Ethical concerns such as signed informed consent, anonymizing data, and confidentiality, and in the handling of sensitive data and discussion of sensitive topics were integral to the study process, especially given the insider role I occupied and the sensitive nature of the caregiving experiences shared.

All participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential impacts of the study before their involvement. Informed consent was obtained through written forms, which outlined the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and it was verbally explained that no compensation would be given for participation in the study. The consent process also emphasized the confidentiality of responses and the use of data solely for academic purposes, to which all participants consented. Copies of the informed consent document are found in Appendix 2 and an extended version in Appendix 3.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study process. All participant data was anonymized by using pseudonyms, and any identifying information was omitted in the final analysis and publications. Data was stored securely on encrypted devices, with access restricted to the researcher. Special care was taken when handling visual data (such as photographs of Lego® Models and Photovoice images), ensuring that participants' identities were not mistakenly revealed in any publication or presentation of such material.

The study explored deeply personal and potentially distressing topics, such as the challenges of balancing caregiving with entrepreneurship. To mitigate any potential emotional discomfort, participants were given the option to withdraw at any point during data collection, as stated in documents in appendices 2 and 3. I employed a trauma-informed approach, ensuring that sensitive topics were approached with care and respect, and time and space were given for breaks throughout the interview process. Interviews were scheduled with no haste, and participants were limited only by their own schedules.

Adherence to the ethical guidelines set by the review board of the University of Turku under Finnish National Board on Study Integrity TENK was ensured throughout the study process.

3.7 Trustworthiness and Rigor

Qualitative study is rarely neat or straightforward, and this study was no exception. At times, I found myself grappling with the inherent messiness of the process and with moments that pushed against my own limits as both a researcher and a person. Study is never perfect, and I learned quickly that, particularly when working with a sensitive topic and with remarkable mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs, challenges were inevitable given the very nature of their roles. For me, some of the greatest challenges came when my own values were confronted through the narratives of participants, particularly when their approaches to family life and caregiving diverged sharply from my own. These moments were not easy; they forced me to sit with discomfort and reflect on how my positionality shaped my interpretations. Another source of difficulty was the practical reality of scheduling, especially in the United Kingdom, where my time was very limited. Last-minute changes often left me frustrated, as I had to rearrange my own commitments to make space for interviews. Yet, it was precisely in these messy, inconvenient, and emotionally challenging moments that the richness of qualitative inquiry revealed itself.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, I applied several key criteria while working through these struggles. Credibility was supported through triangulation of multiple data sources, interviews, Lego® Serious Play (LSP), Photovoice sessions, journals, and observations, and by returning to participants for clarification, even when their reflections unsettled my assumptions. Dependability was pursued through systematic documentation and notation of study procedures, though this iterative process often required revisiting steps that at first felt frustratingly repetitive. Confirmability was strengthened through reflexive journaling, where I acknowledged not only my biases but also my emotional responses, which at times felt overwhelming but ultimately expanded my interpretive depth. Transferability was supported by providing thick, layered descriptions that situated participants' experiences in their wider contexts, helping readers enter their worlds and judge for themselves the

resonance with other settings. By acknowledging and working through these challenges, rather than ignoring them, I was able to uphold the trustworthiness of the study while also remaining honest and reflexive about the realities of doing study with and among mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodological approach utilized to explore the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. Situated within a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm, the study adopted a qualitative, exploratory, and interpretive design and used a purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants whose experiences aligned with the study aims and who fit the study criteria. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, Lego® Serious Play sessions, Photovoice sessions, reflective diaries and notes, and participant observation, enabling both verbal and embodied expression of participants’ realities. This combination of methods facilitated the generation of rich, multimodal data, allowing participants to communicate complex, often emotional, dimensions of their experiences that might otherwise remain inaccessible through traditional verbal methods alone.

Analysis followed a hermeneutic constructivist lens and /or IPA with coding, identification of dimensions/themes, and interpretation guided by the theoretical frameworks of Enrichment Theory, Resilience Theory, Feminist Ethics of Care, and well-being as a lived experience. Reflexivity, ethical rigor, and strategies to ensure trustworthiness were embedded throughout the study process, enhancing credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings.

Although fully capturing the nuances of speech and terminology proved challenging, especially in the UK context, I navigated these complexities with deliberate care. I sought clarification when needed, especially for terms relating to governmental agencies supporting persons with additional needs, which often differed substantially from their Finnish equivalents, of which I am more familiar. One recurring example was the term *tribunal*, described by participants as a group of specialists or judges resolving specific types of legal disputes in a more informal manner than traditional courts. In Finland, participants primarily used English during interviews, but Finnish was employed where precise words were lacking. Navigating this bilingual context as a non-native speaker of Finnish, but familiar with the Finnish systems designed to assist persons with additional needs, presented some challenges and may have limited some nuanced expressions; conversely, relying solely on English may have constrained culturally specific terminology and emotional depth.

Crucially, the trust and rapport established with participants ensured that the data, enriched through art-based methods, remained both rigorous and deeply personal. Despite variability across contexts, this approach provides a nuanced and contextually

grounded understanding of how caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal identity intersect. The integration of interpretive phenomenology with art-based methods not only deepened analytical insight but also exemplifies a participatory, co-constructive study model that foregrounds participants' meaning-making processes. Additionally, throughout the study, participants revealed how simply being asked to reflect and take a moment to pause and consider personal well-being was transformative. For some, this meeting acted as a catalyst to implement changes for the betterment of their well-being, not previously considered.

By employing this methodological design, the study is well-positioned to address the study questions, capturing how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigate, negotiate, and integrate their multifaceted roles. The following chapter presents the five articles, illustrating emergent themes and patterns from participants' narratives and constructed representations, while linking these findings to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks introduced earlier. Collectively, these methods and analytic strategies demonstrate an innovative, ethically grounded, and methodologically robust approach to exploring the complex realities of caregiving and entrepreneurship.

Lastly, throughout the writing and editing process, AI-assisted tools were employed to support clarity, grammar, and overall readability. Specifically, Grammarly was used for proofreading and minor stylistic suggestions, while ChatGPT (version 4) assisted in generating phrasing alternatives and improving textual flow. It is important to note that all analytical decisions, interpretations, and the substantive content of this study were the sole responsibility of the researcher. These tools were used exclusively to enhance communication and presentation, without influencing the collection, coding, or analysis of data.

4 Empirical Articles

This chapter presents the five articles that form the core of this study, collectively exploring the well-being of mother-entrepreneurs caring for children with additional needs. While unified by the overarching focus on maternal well-being, each article addresses a distinct sub-question or thematic dimension, offering complementary insights into how well-being and dimensions of well-being, such as joy, are experienced and negotiated over time. The empirical articles, I, III, and IV, integrate a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective with social constructivist and compassionate study lenses (for sensitive interviews), emphasizing the reflective meaning-making and co-construction of knowledge. Methodologically, the articles are composed of longitudinal qualitative interviews, Lego® Serious Play®, and Photovoice approaches, highlighting the dynamic, evolving nature of well-being and the strategies mothers adapt to their caregiving and entrepreneurial journeys. The conceptual articles, II and V, both address whether entrepreneurship could be suitable based on a collected skill set acquired through caregiving. Together, these studies provide a theoretically and empirically grounded understanding of how caregiving and entrepreneurial roles intersect, shaping resilience, agency, and the subjective well-being of mother-entrepreneurs across multiple contexts and time points. A summary of the articles is listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Empirical and conceptual articles included in this study*.

	Publication (Solo/Co-author)	Study Question	Contribution	Main findings
I	<i>Uncovering Well-being: The Complex Realities of Mompreneurs with Additional Needs Children through LEGO® Serious Play®</i> (Journal of Business Venturing Insights, 2024) (Solo author)	How can we better understand the intricate well-being experiences of entrepreneuring mothers caring for a child with additional needs?	Conceptualises how caregiving impacts self-perception, professional identity, and well-being. Advances in the use of LEGO® Serious Play® as a creative qualitative method.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal Conflict and Self-Neglect, highlighting the tensions between caregiving demands and personal needs. 2. Empowerment, Independence, and Fulfilment reflecting the intrinsic value found in entrepreneurial activities. 3. Resilient Control: Keeping the Balance – illustrating the ongoing negotiation to harmonize caregiving and business responsibilities.

	Publication (Solo/Co-author)	Study Question	Contribution	Main findings
II	<i>A Fresh Perspective on Entrepreneurship as a Career for Mothers to Additional Needs Children</i> (International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2024) (Solo author)	Can entrepreneurship be considered as a reasonable career option for mother-caregivers of children with additional needs?	Highlights the limitations faced by mothers with children with additional needs in traditional employment and presents entrepreneurship as a viable alternative.	Skills gained through caregiving are potentially transferable to entrepreneurship.
III	<i>Momprenurship and Resilience: Exploring Entrepreneurship for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs</i> (Business Study Quarterly, 2025) (First author, co-authored with Ulla Hytti)	A problematizing review addressing how entrepreneurship can serve as a sustainable career path for mothers of children with additional needs?	Positions entrepreneurship as a flexible career option that leverages caregiving-derived skills such as resilience, advocacy, and networking. Challenges structural barriers to maternal employment.	We proposed that entrepreneurship may be an opportunity for mothers with children with additional needs to engage in paid employment within the constraints of their caring responsibilities, if necessary support structures are in place. We also proposed that mothers possess skills, such as resilience, advocacy, and networking, which may be beneficial in entrepreneurship.
IV	<i>Well-being in Flux: A Longitudinal Study of Mothers Balancing Caregiving and Entrepreneurship (Work in Progress, 2026)</i> (Solo author)	How does the well-being of mompreneurs caring for children with additional needs evolve over the course of one year, and what factors influence change and how well-being is experienced?	Provides longitudinal insight into entrepreneurial well-being in caregiving contexts. Contributes to the understanding of dynamic well-being experiences.	Well-being is fluid, shaped by role stressors, business demands, external pressures, and children's changing needs. While entrepreneurship offers autonomy, flexibility, and fulfilment, it also brings financial strain, emotional fatigue, and role conflict. Yet participants show resilience, using entrepreneurship as a way to sustain well-being.
V	<i>Now is the Time for Joy: Exploring Joy as Resistance in Maternal Entrepreneurship</i> (Under review at Journal of Community, Work & Family, 2025) (Solo author) UNDER REVISION 1/2026	How do maternal entrepreneurs caring for children with additional needs experience and define joy?	Reframes joy as a form of resistance and resilience. Offers a feminist interpretation of joy as a relational and transformative force.	Four overarching themes emerged that captured the meanings of joy: 1. Unity in Diversity 2. A Love That Shapes Us Both 3. Resilient Advocacy 4. They call it ordinary; I call it a milestone

* Created by the author

4.1 Article I: Uncovering Well-being: The Complex Realities of Mompreneurs with Additional Needs Children through LEGO® Serious Play®

Studies have consistently shown that caring for a child with additional needs impacts a mother's career trajectory and overall well-being (Blum, 2007). Securing full-time, meaningful employment outside the home often becomes one of the greatest challenges amidst caregiving responsibilities. This article addresses these challenges by exploring how mother-entrepreneurs' children with additional needs construct, experience, and express their personal well-being meaning utilising the Lego® Serious Play® (LSP) method as a participatory study tool. Guided by a social constructionist framework, the study emphasises the co-construction of meaning between participants and the researcher through reflective engagement with their metaphorical Lego® models.

While entrepreneurship has been recognised for offering flexibility and autonomy, factors that can enhance well-being despite the inherent complexities and demands of engaging in entrepreneurial work (Mehta & Parikh, 2022), this article goes beyond traditional study on motherhood or entrepreneurial well-being. It investigates how the intersection of caregiving and entrepreneurial roles actively shapes mothers' interpretations of well-being. The study involved nine mother-entrepreneur-caregivers, seven based in the United Kingdom and two in Finland, all of whom were primary caregivers to a child with AN aged between 8 and 26 years. These women had faced significant barriers to maintaining or securing full-time employment, which led them to pursue entrepreneurial ventures as a viable alternative.

Given the sensitive and deeply personal nature of the topic, selecting an appropriate interview method was critical (Bradshaw et al., 2019). As both a trained LSP facilitator and insider researcher, I identified LSP as a uniquely suitable method for this participant group. Traditionally used in team building, coaching, and ideation contexts, LSP offered an alternative to conventional interviews by allowing participants to externalise their experiences through metaphorical model-building. By focusing the interview on the participant's constructed Lego model rather than direct verbal questioning, the method facilitated deeper reflection on the question:

'What does well-being mean to you?'

Maintaining reflexivity and bracketing personal biases was essential throughout the study process. This was achieved through meticulous written post-interview notes and reflections, and critical self-awareness during interviews. LSP's metaphorical storytelling enabled participants to articulate complex experiences and dimensions of

well-being, fostering critical thinking and expanding the dialogue beyond the initial prompt. Analysis was conducted through a hermeneutic constructivist lens (Peck & Mummery, 2018; Kanagaratnam, 2023), aligning with LSP's theoretical underpinnings and supporting the interpretation of well-being as a co-constructed, evolving phenomenon.

The findings revealed three key dimensions of well-being:

1. Internal Conflict and Self-Neglect- highlighting the tensions between caregiving demands and personal needs.
2. Empowerment, Independence, and Fulfilment – reflecting the intrinsic value found in entrepreneurial activities.
3. Resilient Control: Keeping the Balance – illustrating the ongoing negotiation to harmonise caregiving and business responsibilities.

These dimensions offer an idiographic understanding of well-being, demonstrating how mother-caregivers navigate complex emotions tied to caregiving while finding transformative opportunities in entrepreneurship. Despite the continuous and evolving challenges associated with their child's AN, participants reported that entrepreneurship became an invaluable mechanism for sustaining their well-being, providing a purposeful outlet for channelling caregiving-induced trauma and stress. Furthermore, five of the nine participants identified as neurodivergent, adding layer of complexity to how they understood and navigated their limitations in both caregiving and professional spheres.

This article thus highlights the intricate ways in which caregiving and entrepreneurship intertwine to shape mothers' self-perceptions and experiences of well-being. It underscores the dynamic and contextual nature of well-being, constructed through the simultaneous management of caregiving responsibilities and entrepreneurial pursuits, offering deeper insights into the lived realities of mother-entrepreneur-caregivers.

4.2 Article II: A Fresh Perspective on Entrepreneurship as a Career for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs Children

The caregiving of a child with additional needs can have a stressful influence, particularly on mothers positioned as primary caregivers (Brandon, 2007; Chou et al., 2018). Identified limitations on flexible, paid employment outside the home and potential external stigmatisation regarding employment and caregiving responsibilities (Lewis et al., 1999), as well as internal conflict regarding caregiving

and career, can have a detrimental effect on mother-caregivers. Societal and cultural ideologies reinforce what motherhood should look like, especially when raising a child with additional needs. These expectations are subsequently placed onto mothers to manage caregiving and its evolving needs at each developmental stage (Lang et al., 2021). The weight of these expectations is exacerbated when adding up all the external factors that influence the caregiving narrative, such as the type of additional need, availability of assistance, cost of suitable childcare, and the perceived coping ability of the mother (Heiman, 2021; Shearn & Todd, 2000).

Study consistently shows the economic and psychological toll of raising a child with additional needs exceeding the costs of raising a child without (Stabile and Allin, 2012). This additional financial strain stems from therapy and medical care, lost wages, unexpected expenses (ranging from replacing furniture and clothing to repairing structural damage caused by the child), and costs related to the planning of future care of the child (Porterfield, 2002). Studies also highlight higher amounts of underemployment among these mothers, despite potential accommodations in the workplace (Chou et al., 2018). The cumulative effect leads to increased stress, decreased well-being and a vulnerability that impacts motherhood identity and the economic stability of the family.

Recent studies have emphasised maternal resilience as a means of resistance and a source of psychological protection sustaining mothers' well-being. For example, Bozkur et al. (2022) identify resilience as an intermediary when considering the relationship between internalised conflict and caregiver burnout. Their findings suggest that while societal ideologies of motherhood compounded with internalised gendered expectations leading to role stress, resilience acts as a buffer that enables mothers to navigate these conflicts more effectively. In this light, resilience can be seen as a trait aiding in personal and external realms, offering support within both caregiving and external domains.

Traits such as complex problem-solving, networking, multitasking, and advocacy developed in the caregiving context have the potential to extend beyond coping with daily challenges, but act as a form of identity preservation and an adaptability to uncertainty (Heiman, 2002; Taanila et al., 2002). Such traits align with study on mothers of children with additional needs who demonstrate drawing on these traits to combat, for example, the stigmatisation of the additional need (Yip and Chan, 2022). These traits, nurtured under challenging caregiving conditions, could therefore be transferable to professional roles, particularly entrepreneurial ones, where these traits, alongside adaptability are central to the caregiving role.

Workplace flexibility is vital for maternal workforce retention (Crettenden et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2022), particularly when mothers are caring for children with additional needs. Yet, mothers are disproportionately required to adapt or end employment due to employer inflexibility (Scott, 2018). It goes without saying that flexibility varies by occupation; however, what has been established is that low-

wage work offers fewer accommodations than mothers employed in higher-paid positions (Fuller and Hirsh, 2019). Meaningful engagement in paid employment is shown as beneficial in providing well-being and psychological benefits, social contacts and motivating mothers to continue seeking employment even when faced with unpredictable caregiving demands (Lewis et al., 1999; Deming, 2023).

Entrepreneurship offers an alternative to waged employment, with the potential to provide mothers with greater autonomy in balancing caregiving and work responsibilities. Female entrepreneurship is often motivated by personal rewards, such as work-family balance and personal autonomy that extend beyond financial gains (Murnieks et al., 2019; Haynie and Shepherd, 2011). Additionally, study suggests that female entrepreneurship is often driven by the need to recover from or adapt to traumatic life experiences. For mothers raising children with additional needs, the caregiving role itself can constitute both a traumatic and transformative life event (Hudspeth, 2015).

Study further identifies that female entrepreneurship is frequently shaped by an ethic of care, which places empathy, community, and responsible business practices at the foreground (Xie and Wu, 2022). As such, motherhood entrepreneurship aligns with the caregiving values of the women who may channel resilience, advocacy, and solution-focused skills into ventures which can create social and economic value. Additionally, study indicates that engaging in entrepreneurship can help reduce stigma by framing mothers as socially recognized contributors to society rather than solely as caregivers (Ryan and Runswick-Cole, 2008). Similarly, Kašperová et al. (2018) highlight that entrepreneurship can support the reconstruction of mothers' identities.

This article highlights traits that mothers of children with additional needs can leverage to create entrepreneurial ventures. Through entrepreneurship, mother-caregivers can ease familial economic strain, challenge gendered expectations of motherhood, and enhance their well-being. Traits such as maternal resilience emerge as key protective factors (Bozkur et al., 2022), shielding mothers from economic and societal pressures while creating a venture. With identified barriers to flexible, waged employment, entrepreneurship offers a potentially viable alternative that draws on the resilience and transferable skills cultivated through caregiving. Further study is suggested to examine how entrepreneurial pathways can further promote well-being, reduce stigma, and support sustainable careers for these mothers and potentially their children (Auldridge, 2025).

4.3 Article III: Mompreneurship and Resilience: Exploring Entrepreneurship for Mothers of Children with Additional Needs

This conceptual article presents a problematizing review using enrichment and role conflict theories (Anglin et al., 2022), exploring how mothers of children with additional needs might construct and experience well-being by applying caregiving-acquired skills. These skills, such as resilience, networking, advocacy, and multitasking, could, under the right circumstances, be applicable to the creation of entrepreneurial ventures that align with their caregiving responsibilities (Ekinsmyth, 2013). However, the extent to which these skills foster well-being depends on external support systems, including family, governmental agencies, and institutional structures (Duberley & Carrigan, 2013).

The review method enabled a reflexive and critical engagement with the literature, rather than building upon previous literature, which allowed for the illumination of how well-being can be seen not as a static state but as an evolving construct, deeply embedded in the mothers' everyday practices, role negotiations, and meaning-making processes. The selected 52 articles allowed for the identification of overlooked pathways through which mothers sustain well-being, particularly by finding purpose in advocacy and deriving a sense of competence from their caregiving experiences.

Findings suggest that caregiving can serve as a source of personal and familial enrichment, challenging deficit-based narratives of raising children with AN (Goff et al., 2017). By reframing caregiving as a site of skill development and empowerment, mothers can actively construct a sense of well-being that transcends the confines of societal expectations of "good" motherhood (Blum, 2007) and gain well-being benefits through employing skills acquired through caregiving.

Moreover, the article underscores the dynamic nature of well-being in collaboration with caregiving and challenges assumptions. Additionally, this article demonstrated that while role multiplicity is challenging, it can enhance psychological resilience as mothers adapt to shifting caregiving demands and entrepreneurial challenges. Sustaining well-being is facilitated through strong family units and support networks, which can serve as a buffer to role stress and enable mothers to balance care work with entrepreneurial pursuits (Munsell & O'Malley, 2019).

The review contributes to understanding how well-being can be influenced and co-constructed through caregiving and entrepreneurship, experienced in the fluid navigation of multiple roles, and sustained by the interplay of personal agency, social support, and systemic factors. Future study should examine how these dynamics evolve across different contexts and life stages, influencing mothers' entrepreneurial decision-making and long-term well-being.

4.4 Article IV: Well-being in Flux: A Longitudinal Study of Mothers Balancing Caregiving and Entrepreneurship

This study investigates the well-being of mother-entrepreneurs (mompreneurs) caring for children with additional needs. The experiences of this group are consistently underexplored in literature despite the scholarly attention to entrepreneurial well-being overall (Dhaliwal, 2022). Mompreneurs face complex role stressors, including balancing business ownership with caregiving demands, financial pressures, and trauma-related challenges (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010). Existing literature often frames entrepreneurial well-being as static and overlooks the nuanced, evolving nature of well-being, particularly where caregiving plays a central role (Wiklund et al., 2019).

The study adopts a longitudinal perspective over one year, examining how well-being shifts in response to the interplay between caregiving and entrepreneurial roles (Luhmann et al., 2014). Drawing on hermeneutic phenomenology within a constructivist framework (Lindseth & Norberg, 2022; Löbner et al., 2006) and a compassionate lens (Hansen & Trank, 2016), the study explores participants' subjective well-being narratives, emphasising resilience, adaptive strategies, and personal growth (Bayat, 2007; Pacis, 2023). By focusing on the fluidity of well-being for mompreneurs caring for children with additional needs, the study identifies potential change agents influencing well-being transitions and offers insights into the dual impact of caregiving and entrepreneurial pressures on well-being trajectories (Casteleijn-Osorno & Hytti, 2025; Deming, 2023).

This study investigates the evolving well-being of mother-entrepreneurs caring for children with additional needs, situating the study within a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological orientation (Tanlaka & Aryal, 2025; Van Manen, 2017). Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed the researcher to engage deeply with participants' narratives, interpreting lived experiences as context-dependent and co-constructed rather than objectively measured (Busch & Oerther, 2020). Social constructivism further frames knowledge as emerging through interaction between participant experiences and researcher reflexivity, enabling a nuanced, contextually grounded understanding of how caregiving, entrepreneurship, and societal expectations intersect (Löbner et al., 2006). A compassionate researcher lens emphasized psychological safety, empathy, and participant autonomy, ensuring that sensitive topics related to caregiving, gendered expectations, and entrepreneurial pressures could be explored in a supportive environment (Hansen & Trank, 2016).

Table 6. Identified well-being themes and observed transitions.

Identified themes 2023	Identified themes 2024	Identified transitions
Control and Resilience	Boundary Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of additional staff to support business operations. • Redistribution of responsibilities to enhance efficiency and workload management. • Implementation of firm boundaries to maintain work-life balance.
Self-Neglect	Self-Prioritization/Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating dedicated time for self-care following intervention efforts. • Recognizing and addressing burnout with the support of change agents. • Selling of property/business as a strategic decision to manage resources and reduce burden.
Guilt and Grief	Growth and acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of child brought independence/acceptance/understanding • Accepting support will always be required • Acknowledging entrepreneurship as the only career choice (to maintain both roles)
	Gender roles and caregiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbalance of household/caregiving tasks

Source(s): Author's own work

Methodologically, the study employed Lego® Serious Play® (LSP) as both a data collection and reflective tool, enabling participants to construct metaphorical models of their well-being experiences. This approach facilitated deep introspection, co-constructed meaning-making, and the articulation of complex experiences that might be difficult to convey verbally (Vuosio et al., 2021; Roos & Victor, 2018). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in familiar settings, guided by appreciative questioning and an open-ended prompt: “What does well-being mean to you?”, to ensure rich, longitudinal exploration across 2023 and 2024 (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Gauntlett, 2014). By integrating these theoretical and methodological components, the study provides a robust framework for understanding how resilience, agency, and reflection on daily practices shape the well-being trajectories of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigating intersecting personal and professional roles.

Results from this article are reflected in Table 6, including the identified transitions in the well-being experiences from the initial study and what was uncovered one year later.

This study investigates the nuanced and evolving well-being of mother-entrepreneurs (mompreneurs) caring for children with additional needs and addresses gaps in understanding the intersection of entrepreneurship, caregiving, and subjective well-being. Guided by hermeneutic phenomenology within a social constructivist framework and a compassionate researcher lens, the study emphasizes interpretive

engagement, co-construction of meaning, and participant psychological safety (Hansen & Trank, 2016; Casteleijn-Osorno, 2025).

Key findings highlight the fluidity and evolving nature of well-being. In 2023, themes such as Control and Resilience, Self-Neglect, and Guilt and Grief captured the emotional tension of balancing caregiving and entrepreneurship. By 2024, new themes: Boundary Setting, Self-Prioritization/Care, Growth, and Acceptance, will reflect enabled strategies for managing well-being, driven by awareness of personal limits and the need for self-care. The study demonstrates that while LSP supports self-reflection, meaningful well-being changes are contingent upon psychological readiness, the amount of support from supportive systems, and the desire to implement change.

The study further positions entrepreneurship as a domain where caregiving-derived skills, such as resilience, advocacy, adaptability, can enhance personal and professional well-being. Limitations include a small sample size, restricted LEGO® materials, and limited examination of cultural differences, suggesting avenues for future study, such as larger, cross-cultural, or longitudinal studies and exploration of neurodivergence in caregiving entrepreneurs. Overall, the study underscores that subjective well-being is dynamic and context-dependent, shaped by the interplay of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and the ability to take time for self-reflection.

4.5 Article V: Now is the Time for Joy: Exploring Joy as Resistance in Maternal Entrepreneurship

This study explores how mother-entrepreneurs caring for children with additional needs experience and construct joy, addressing gaps in study on the intersection of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal well-being (Spitzer et al., 2003; Munsell & O'Malley, 2019). Caregiving is framed as a gendered and relational practice, often seen or rather unseen, and considered invisible and undervalued labour. Yet this study highlights how mothers reframe caregiving as a source of empowerment and skill development, coining the concept of “caregiving entrepreneurship” to capture the dual roles of caregiver and entrepreneur (Casteleijn-Osorno & Hytti, 2025).

The study is theoretically grounded in Enrichment Theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), Resilience Theory (Palacio et al., 2020), and Feminist Ethics of Care (Keller & Kittay, 2017), offering a multidimensional framework for understanding how joy is experienced and co-constructed within the boundaries of caregiving. Enrichment Theory emphasizes how caregiving and entrepreneurial roles can potentially mutually enhance personal growth and fulfilment. Resilience Theory highlights how mothers draw on internal and external resources to adapt to adversity to sustain well-being. In turn, entrepreneurship is viewed as serving as both a practical and symbolic source of agency (Bagheri et al., 2024; Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Feminist Ethics of Care situates caregiving within relational and moral contexts, challenging dominant deficit-

focused narratives and highlighting the empowering aspects of maternal labour (Higgins-Desbiolles & Manjit, 2022).

Methodologically, the study combines photovoice, a participatory visual method (Burlles & Thomas, 2014), with interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2017). This approach allows participants to articulate joy through both narrative and visual media, centring children as autonomous individuals and reflecting the temporal dynamics of caregiving. The integration of participatory methods with IPA enables rich, co-constructed insights into how mothers navigate intersecting caregiving and entrepreneurial roles, revealing joy as a vital, relational, and politically meaningful dimension of maternal experience.

Participants were invited to take photographs representing moments of experienced joy using the Photovoice method, which guided the interview as a way to gain deeper reflection and dialogue with the participant. Each photograph/image provided insights into the lives of the participants and acted as a prompt for discussion. By combining this visual imagery with the narratives of the participants, Photovoice provided rich data grounded in the lived experiences and expressions of joy for the mother-caregiver-entrepreneur participants.

5 Discussion

This chapter synthesizes and extends the findings presented across the five articles of this study. Rather than seeking theoretical closure, the discussion is framed as a phenomenological opening, and an invitation to view the intersections of care and entrepreneurship through the lived and often contradictory realities of the participants. Section 5.1 revisits the study objectives, while Section 5.2 explores the cross-cutting themes of well-being, autonomy, and value. Sections 5.3–5.6 situate these findings within the philosophical and theoretical frameworks previously established, ensuring that the transition from individual accounts to broader synthesis remains epistemologically grounded in a hermeneutic of empathy.

5.1 Introduction: revisiting the study objectives

This study has aimed to uncover how mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs negotiate the intersections of caregiving, entrepreneurship, identity, and well-being. To maintain methodological coherence, the inquiry remains anchored in a stabilized, focused phenomenon: situated well-being. One primary and three sub-questions guided this inquiry:

How is situated well-being co-constructed and sustained by mother-caregivers within the intersecting lived realities of intensive caregiving and entrepreneurial activity?

Sub-questions:

- 1. How does entrepreneurship influence and shape the well-being of mothers with children with additional needs?*
- 2. How does the lived experience of caregiving shape mothers' entrepreneurial choices, practices, and definitions of success as components of their well-being?*
- 3. How do caregiving and entrepreneurship together facilitate the emergence of skills, identity, and joy as pillars of sustained well-being?*

The answers to these questions were sought through five articles, with each independent study contributing a different perspective on the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. Taken together, these articles suggest, rather than conclude, that motherhood, caregiving, and entrepreneurship are not exclusive activities but mutually informing practices. Identity shaping is revealed as an ongoing, fluid negotiation between caregiving demands and multiple professional roles.

Within this interplay, joy emerges as a central, stabilizing force. It is not presented here as a passing emotion, but as a critical form of embodied resilience and one that adds collective value. This integrative discussion, therefore, offers a tentative reframing of entrepreneurial motivation and caregiver well-being. By keeping the findings open, this synthesis provides a rich, nuanced account of the possibilities and constraints mothers face, inviting a re-evaluation of how agency is exercised within structurally limited intersections.

5.2 Care and entrepreneurship: interwoven practices

The findings across the articles suggest that caregiving and entrepreneurship are not separate terrains of women's lives but mutually inclusive areas with overlapping practices. For mother-caregivers, entrepreneurship is pursued not only to secure a livelihood but can also be viewed as an extension of their caregiving role. This synthesis tentatively proposes the construct of *caregiving entrepreneurship* to describe this phenomenon. Rather than a closed explanatory model, this label serves as a sensitizing construct that emerged from the participants' own descriptions of how skills acquired through caregiving, such as radical empathy, advocacy, and hyper-vigilance, are put into practice within their ventures.

Participants described how running a business provided flexibility and the ability to organize work around their caregiving and family schedules, enabling them to respond to their child's evolving needs, echoing findings from the literature (Østerud et al., 2024; Sim et al., 2021). Concurrently, however, entrepreneurial activity introduced additional burdens. Role conflict was shown to be affected by the financial insecurity of entrepreneurship, along with irregular working hours, which adds to the pressures already associated with caring for a child with additional needs (Souza et al, 2025). These pressures illustrate how entrepreneurship is not an unequivocal solution to employment challenges; rather, it represents a space where mothers manage multiple roles under supported, yet often precarious, conditions (Blum, 2007; Heiman, 2021).

Additionally, this counter-perspective highlights the risk that framing entrepreneurship as an enabling career opportunity serves to individualize responsibility for managing the complex intersections of care, work, and economic

security. By presenting entrepreneurship as a solution, there is a danger of overlooking how this shift leaves broader structural arrangements unchallenged. This, in turn, will continue to position women as primarily responsible for caregiving while the state and traditional employment markets remain convoluted and inaccessible. Concurrently, entrepreneurial activity introduced additional burdens. Role conflict was shown to be affected by the financial insecurity of entrepreneurship, along with irregular working hours, which can be seen as adding to the pressures already associated with caring for a child with additional needs (Souza et al., 2025).

The duality of caregiving and entrepreneurship highlights the relevance of a feminist ethics of care framework in understanding these practices. Care is not peripheral to business but actively shapes entrepreneurial logics. This study identifies creative sense-making as the interpretive process through which mothers bridge these roles. By applying empathy and networking skills curated through caregiving into business practices, such as interactions with their clients and in the creation of products, mothers enact the strengths identified by Pearson (2024) and Lalvani and Hale (2015). This ethics of care perspective illuminates how caregiving values and being attentive to familial needs inform how decisions are made (Solomon et al., 2001; O’Riordan et al., 2023).

However, the findings reveal that doors remain both open and closed in this intersection. While caregiving enriches practice by fostering resilience, it simultaneously constrains growth opportunities and financial success, reflecting inequalities in gendered expectations (Spitzer et al., 2003). Mother-entrepreneurs navigate this tension continuously, balancing moments of empowerment with the risk of overextension and paying the resilience tax. This delicate interplay challenges binary categorizations of women entrepreneurs as either “empowered” or “burdened” (Ahl, 2006).

Importantly, these findings extend the discourse on maternal entrepreneurship by illustrating how entrepreneurship can operate as a site of creative sense-making, reframing what is often perceived as a burdened role into one of enrichment and agency. By transforming caregiving responsibilities into a source of relational and social value, mothers enact a form of resilience that sustains well-being while shaping their ventures. This underscores how identity, caregiving, and entrepreneurship are mutually constitutive, creating opportunities for meaning-making even within structural barriers. By reframing business activities as sites of personal and collective value, mother-entrepreneurs build legitimacy for themselves and their children (Aldridge, 2025). These interwoven practices set the stage for exploring how joy, identity, and collective value emerge within these overlapping roles, illustrating the emotional and social dimensions that fuel mother-entrepreneurs in their dual responsibilities.

5.3 Identity, well-being, and success

The first two sub-questions: how entrepreneurship influences the well-being of mothers with children with additional needs, and how caregiving shapes their entrepreneurial choices, practices, and definitions of success, are addressed through findings across the multiple studies in this study. Raising a child with AN profoundly shapes a mother's identity, influencing how she perceives herself both as a woman and as a mother. Identity is continuously negotiated in relation to the child's present and future needs, which are often unpredictable and may intensify over time (Martinez, 2017; Skinner et al., 1999). A mother's perception of perceived failures in raising a child with additional needs illustrates the formative impact of caregiving on maternal identity (Finardi et al., 2022), compounded by prior life experiences and societal expectations of motherhood. Additionally, a mother's personal aspirations, whether for motherhood, career, or self-fulfilment, often influence how she sees herself, especially when such goals are set aside to prioritize her child's needs (Nichols et al., 2022; Owens-Schill et al., 2025).

Shared experiences of stigma or challenges regarding the child resonate deeply with mothers, leaving lasting scars on motherhood identity (Pacis, 2023). Societal pressures surrounding ideals of mothering, combined with internalized expectations, create internal tensions, self-doubt, and the sense of not doing "enough," further reinforcing self-stigmatization (Eaton et al., 2016). The unpredictability and evolving nature of caregiving demands, alongside societal perceptions and ongoing self-evaluation, form a persistent stressor requiring constant identity negotiation (Sim et al., 2021). These processes highlight the interwoven nature of identity, caregiving, and well-being. A mother's sense of self is shaped by her child's needs and societal expectations, making maternal well-being highly contingent on factors often beyond her control (Palacio et al., 2023). However, this interplay suggests that well-being is not merely an individual achievement but is deeply embedded within structural arrangements. Framing well-being solely as a result of personal resilience may risk individualizing the responsibility for navigating these pressures, potentially obscuring the lack of broader institutional support for the mother-caregiver role. Despite these pressures, success is viewed as enjoying moments of joy, relational bonding, and acceptance that emerge through caregiving. This self-realization plays a pivotal role in supporting both well-being and identity development of mother-caregivers (Finardi et al., 2022). When mothers adopt a merciful stance toward their limitations and recognize the value of their efforts, they reinforce relational bonds and cultivate a sense of purpose (Sim et al., 2021; O'Riordan et al., 2023). These positive caregiving experiences, including fostering emotional regulation and acceptance among siblings (Alon, 2025), contribute not only to maternal enrichment but also to the development of entrepreneurial agency. Within this context, resilience and adaptive capacities gained through caregiving shape entrepreneurial choices,

practices, and definitions of success in ways aligned with mothers' values and priorities. Entrepreneurship, in turn, supports well-being by offering flexibility, autonomy, and meaningful engagement, providing personal fulfilment and the potential for broader social impact.

However, the findings here invite a realistic, open interpretation of entrepreneurial autonomy. While entrepreneurship offers a path to well-being, framing it primarily as a positive opportunity carries a risk of individualizing the responsibility for economic and emotional security. This focus on individual resilience can inadvertently obscure the dark side of this intersection. This dark side should not be hidden, but rather addressed through illuminating the broader structural arrangements that continue to position women as primarily responsible for care without sufficient institutional support.

Against this backdrop of increased responsibility, identity and resilience take on a heightened importance. As such, entrepreneurial well-being in the lives of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs cannot be reduced to a singular definition, but must be understood individually, formed by employment inequities, shaped by societal shortcomings, and defined within the lived realities of family life. Viewed in this context, entrepreneurship extends beyond a purely economic strategy, serving also as a means of sustaining joy and hope while simultaneously highlighting the systemic gaps that make such personal endurance necessary.

Thus, the findings illustrate a dynamic, reciprocal relationship. Caregiving informs and shapes entrepreneurial engagement, while entrepreneurship supports identity, purpose, and well-being. This creates a mutually reinforcing interplay between maternal and professional roles, yet it remains a tentative balance that is constantly reshaped by external conditions. By maintaining this interpretive openness, the study highlights how success is defined within the tension of personal agency and structural constraints, ensuring that the findings reflect the ongoing, creative sense-making of the participants rather than theoretical closure.

5.3.1 Entrepreneurial Well-being

Entrepreneurial well-being emerges in this study as an ongoing negotiation between personal constraints, responsibility, and resilience. The broader entrepreneurship literature recognizes that well-being is both a resource and an outcome of entrepreneurial activity, shaped by the tensions between autonomy, uncertainty, and meaning-making (Wiklund et al., 2019). For the mothers in this study, entrepreneurship operates as a coping mechanism but can also be seen as a source of strain, which reflects previous findings that well-being is produced through the balancing of entrepreneurial demands (Uy, Foo, & Song, 2013; Shepherd & Patzelt,

2015) and, in this case, in conjunction with other meaningful demands such as caregiving.

Motherhood, and particularly caregiving for children with AN, intensifies these dynamics. This aligns with previous studies which identify women's entrepreneurship as embedded within the family and as such is deeply influenced by gendered responsibilities (Jennings & Brush, 2013). For many mothers of children with AN, entrepreneurship is less a pursuit of opportunity than a necessity brought out due to challenges or exclusion from traditional employment (Rouse, Treanor, & Fleck, 2013). This reflects Ekinsmyth's (2013) insights into "mumpreneurship" as a practice where business and caregiving merge to create an autonomous career while balancing caregiving responsibilities. Well-being while managing multiple roles is therefore seen as dependent on a mother's capacity to manage said competing roles simultaneously. Policy limitations further exacerbate the tension, with work-family policies remaining insufficiently responsive to the realities of self-employed mothers carrying the primary caregiving responsibility (Dubois, 2019).

As such, entrepreneurial well-being in the lives of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs cannot be reduced to a singular definition, but must be understood individually, shaped by employment inequities, societal shortcomings, and the lived realities of family life. Viewed in this context, entrepreneurship extends beyond a purely economic strategy, serving also as a means of sustaining joy and hope amid ongoing adversity (Stephan, 2018).

5.4 Resilience in everyday entrepreneurial-caregiving practices

The third sub-question: how does caregiving contribute to the development of skills, identity, and joy in entrepreneurial mothers? was addressed through findings across the study. Resilience in the context of entrepreneurial caregiving must be understood not simplistically as a matter of "coping," but as an adaptive skill shaped by the ongoing negotiation between personal resources, including support within the family, and structural conditions (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Bekhet, 2023). For mothers of AN children who simultaneously engage in entrepreneurial work, resilience represents a practiced, yet necessary skill enacted daily through the creation and implementation of strategies required to reframe work, including resource-seeking. These strategies echo Bagheri et al.'s (2024) insights that resilience in entrepreneurship involves "bearing the unbearable," particularly in times of crises. For a mother-caregiver-entrepreneur, crises can arise spontaneously from myriad demands of their child(ren), requiring immediate attention. The expectation to remain alert and accessible emerged repeatedly in the narratives as 'just a part of my life.'

Similarly, Branca et al. (2025) argue that prior experiences and personal traits interact with entrepreneurial challenges, positioning resilience as a dynamic, evolving process. This was reflected in the participating mothers' narratives, many of whom described always preparing with a plan A, B, and C, shaped by experiences in both caregiving and entrepreneurial work. For some, this anticipatory skill appeared innate, particularly among mothers identifying as neurodivergent, for whom predicting and coordinating unpredictability had become second nature. For others, it was cultivated gradually over time. In both cases, these practices illustrate how caregiving-derived resilience is not only vital for family well-being but also transferable into entrepreneurial agency, shaping both identity and skill development.

Mothers in this study exemplified how caregiving-related resilience informs entrepreneurial practices. Boundary work emerged as a critical strategy (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2006), with mothers actively negotiating the limits between caregiving demands and entrepreneurial engagement, sometimes by blending responsibilities, other times by protecting their entrepreneurial identity from being consumed by care responsibilities. Reframing challenges was another central practice, transforming the difficulties of raising an AN child into sources of strength, insight, or purpose that inform business values (Casteleijn-Osorno & Hytti, 2025). Creativity, employed both for problem-solving and entrepreneurial innovation, enabled flexible solutions accommodating unpredictable caregiving schedules. Additionally, the intuitive seeking of resources, through networks, peer communities, or institutional support, functioned as a lifeline sustaining dual roles (Goff et al., 2017; Levine, 2009).

Importantly, resilience was relational. It was co-constructed within the women themselves, within families, as mothers relied on partners, siblings, and extended networks for emotional and practical support (Güçlü & Hürmeşyan, 2024; Heiman, 2002). It also extended outward into communities and networks of fellow mothers, entrepreneurs, and advocacy groups, where mutual recognition of struggle fostered collective strength. Institutional structures, including disability services and entrepreneurial support systems, played a pivotal role, sometimes enabling, but in this study, primarily challenging or undermining resilience (Branca et al., 2025). Through these caregiving-derived practices, mothers developed not only resilience and practical skills but also reinforced aspects of identity and experienced moments of joy. The integration of these capabilities into entrepreneurial engagement illustrates how caregiving shapes not only what mothers do in business but also how they define success and derive meaning from their work.

This study would be remiss not to acknowledge that resilience is too often cultivated out of necessity, forged in response to structural and life-limiting barriers that demand mothers develop a kind of thick skin. For that very reason, some mothers adopt what can be described as a mother-warrior role (Sousa, 2011),

constantly challenging discrepancies and shortcomings in measures that are ostensibly designed to assist their child. While structural initiatives present themselves as supportive of children with additional needs and their families, in practice, they often fall short, create confusion, or even cause harm, leaving mothers to continuously pay physical and emotional penalties in the form of resilience tax. Policy inconsistencies, chronically under-resourced disability services, and persistent gendered inequalities not only obstruct access to vital assistance but also retraumatize families year after year, as mothers must repeatedly negotiate for the most basic supports. These systemic gaps compel mothers to fill the void through personal strength, improvisation, and relentless advocacy (Bagheri et al., 2024; Casteleijn-Osorno & Hytti, 2025).

Alongside these structural challenges, loneliness is a pervasive experience for many mothers in this study. The paradox of being labelled as “strong” mother-warriors is that it often leaves them feeling unable to acknowledge vulnerability or admit when the weight of their responsibilities becomes burdensome. For some participants, being told that they “always have a problem” with services or that “some agency is always doing them wrong” has further isolated them, strained/lost friendships, and discouraged efforts to build or maintain social relationships. Such rejection intensifies feelings of isolation and undermines well-being (Baş et al., 2023). This is particularly significant given that women’s well-being is strongly associated with social support (Akram et al., 2024), and its absence has long been linked to adverse physical and psychological outcomes, including depression (Dunst et al., 1986; Florian & Krulik, 1991; Hazan-Liran & Levkovich, 2025). In response, many mothers have sought out their own spaces of solidarity, including online forums (Heiman, 2017) and organized gatherings, where their experiences can be shared without judgment, their vulnerability recognized with resilience, and caregiving burdens collectively acknowledged (Balcı et al., 2019). While these spaces do not replace the need for robust formal support systems, they offer a meaningful means of alleviating some of the isolation these mothers experience.

Resilience, therefore, emerges in this study as both a celebrated capacity and an imposed burden: a daily necessity for surviving environments never designed to accommodate the complicated and interwoven realities of motherhood-caregiving and entrepreneurship. However, as noted in the critiques of individualised responsibility, framing entrepreneurship solely as a positive career opportunity may risk masking the structural arrangements that force women into such high levels of endurance. Yet, while resilience is demanded by unjust systems and fair-weather friends, it also becomes a powerful source of agency and identity. In practicing resilience, mothers not only safeguard their own well-being but also empower other mothers by modelling strategies of endurance, advocacy, and creative adaptation.

Some mothers actively turn the proverbial lemons into lemonade, driven from necessity into a form of collective strength.

In this way, resilience is inseparable from maternal identity and well-being, simultaneously revealing systemic inequities while affirming mothers' capacity to reframe hardship into purpose and relational empowerment as seen in Figure 6. By transforming caregiving challenges, such as facing barriers with intention and resilience and funnelling strength into entrepreneurial ventures, mothers reaffirm a sense of purpose and agency that reinforces their identity as both caregivers and entrepreneurs. Yet, the necessity of being hypervigilant and sustaining high levels of resilience also reveals the unequal social conditions that shape the mother-warrior identity. This highlights the need for systemic change to ensure that well-being and entrepreneurial potential are not dependent on extraordinary maternal endurance, which, for some mothers, is not eternally sustainable.

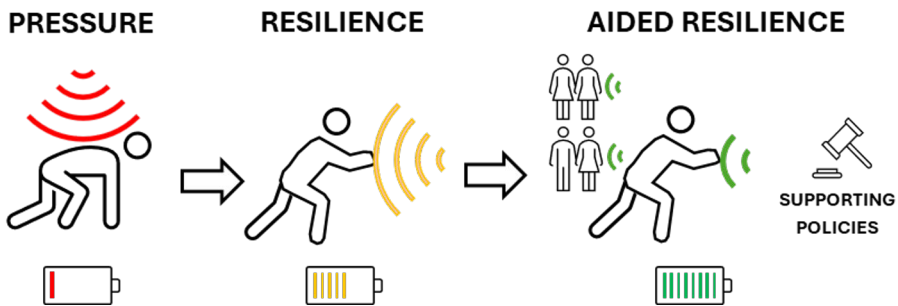


Figure 6. Resilience as a shared experience.

At the start of the study, as I began conversing with participants about seemingly mundane aspects of daily life, a theme of joy gradually began to emerge. It was so subtle, I did not immediately recognize it; it was only upon reviewing reflections, noting smiles, and recalling expressive discussions that its presence became undeniable. Joy was the silent passenger in our conversations, sometimes surfacing quietly through tears, in laughter, threading through each interview and shared cup of coffee. As trust grew, the women shared anecdotes about their lives with a child with AN, and the more they laughed, cried, and recounted experiences, the clearer it became that, much like my own reflections, life with a child with AN could also be profoundly joyful.

Joy, as articulated by participants, transcends fleeting happiness. It emerges as both a form of resistance and a source of sustenance, breathing life into the challenges, particularly within the intersecting spheres of caregiving and entrepreneurship. Drawing on enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and

resilience theory (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000), and viewed through the epistemological orientation of a Feminist ethics of care (Keller & Kittay, 2017), this study conceptualizes joy as an affective and relational force. It arises through everyday practices of care and is deeply embedded within social, emotional, and economic contexts. Amongst all the significant findings, joy rises to the top as an important yet often under-represented dimension of caregiving.

For the participants, joy brought a sense of family unity, where joy was described as relational, co-created through everyday interactions and planning of family moments. Entrepreneurship provided both the flexibility and resources that enabled these joyful experiences to occur, illustrating how caregiving entrepreneurship can transform family routines into joy-generating moments. Joy experienced by the participants was described as a love unlike any other. They felt the love for their child as both overwhelming and transformative, "a love that breaks you." Joy and love were inseparable, rising from the tension between the intensely experienced caregiving burdens and the profound fulfilment experienced due to seeing a child with additional needs develop.

In this context, joy is a fulfilling emotion, as participants experience the daily increments of joy through development in their child's growth and autonomy. Assisted by their resilient strength, joy was identified in realizing their own hard work has brought their children to where they are today, intertwining love, pride, joy, and resistance into the motherhood experience. Seeing their children achieve small goals, often invisible to others, became a powerful source of joy, validating a mother's caregiving labour and highlighting the tension between protecting their child and celebrating their independence. Joy was heightened by the years of waiting, all the missed opportunities, and constant uncertainty, making joyful moments deeply emotional.

This paradox reflects the emotional labour of sustaining hope and well-being amid caregiving's ongoing demands and the ongoing nature of this type of caregiving, with a love that breaks you. While these findings illustrate how caregiving and entrepreneurship mutually reinforce one another, it is vital to keep interpretive doors open regarding the structural costs of this joy. If joy is framed only as a personal resource for resilience, there is a risk of individualizing the responsibility for well-being, potentially masking the systemic failures that require such extraordinary emotional labour.

In this light, joy functions as both a personal and social resource: it sustains mothers, strengthens family bonds, creates a family identity, and affirms caregiving as a site of identity-making. Recognizing joy as integral to mother-caregiver-entrepreneurship well-being opens new avenues for study, policy, and practice, which demonstrate the interrelated nature of the dimensions of caregiving and entrepreneurship alike. Recognizing joy as integral to mother-caregiver-

entrepreneurship well-being opens new avenues for research, policy, and practice, which demonstrate the interrelated nature of the dimensions of caregiving and entrepreneurship alike.

5.5 Role Enrichment and Positioning of Findings

Within the context of caregiving and role enrichment, Enrichment Theory suggests that skills and capacities developed through caregiving may extend into other domains, such as entrepreneurship (Aldridge, 2025) and advocacy (Szlamka et al., 2022). In this study, entrepreneurship appears not merely as a financial pursuit but as a potential avenue for empowerment, offering mothers opportunities for autonomy and the ability to shape work around family needs while navigating structural constraints (Vershina & McAdam, 2022). However, it is important to acknowledge that these potential benefits are contingent and context-dependent. Not all caregiving-acquired skills may translate seamlessly into entrepreneurial practice, and structural barriers, resource limitations, or competing demands can constrain the extent to which empowerment and identity enhancement are realized.

Similarly, advocacy can be viewed as an extension of caregiving, enabling mothers to address inequities and generate social impact through lived experience, whether advocating for one's own child or initiating broader initiatives to promote independence and equal rights for other children (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). Yet, engagement in advocacy and entrepreneurship may also introduce additional emotional and temporal burdens. These burdens further highlight the tension between opportunity and obligation. Taken together, while these roles may function as mutually reinforcing avenues of empowerment, rooted in caregiving yet extending into broader social and economic spheres. The effects, therefore, are neither uniform nor guaranteed. This points to the need for a nuanced understanding of how caregiving, identity, and well-being intersect with entrepreneurial and advocacy practices, and for further exploration of the conditions under which such enrichment is feasible.

Taken together, the findings of this study demonstrate that motherhood, caregiving, and entrepreneurship are mutually important in how they influence the well-being of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. Joy and resilience emerge as central and transformative dimensions that operate as an affective and identity-shaping force, co-constructed through everyday acts of care and advocacy. Joy and Resilience are not fleeting emotions but dynamic resources that sustain mothers, strengthen family bonds, and enable entrepreneurial engagement, which simply could not occur without the other for the participants in this study. Through Enrichment Theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), these findings highlight how entrepreneurial activity extends beyond financial outcomes to serve as a space for

identity negotiation, personal fulfilment, and the enrichment of relationships, but also to bring joy to the family unit. Mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs draw on skills honed through caregiving, the emotional attunement to their child, logistical planning, and adaptive problem-solving to navigate the waters of uncertainty and take on the demands of entrepreneurial work. This illustrates the concept of caregiving entrepreneurship as a mutually reinforcing nexus between care and business practice, where caregiving skills directly translate into entrepreneurial capabilities.

Within care study, the study challenges deficit-oriented or burden-focused narratives that often frame caregiving as inherently exhausting and with limitations (Keller & Kittay, 2017). Instead, caregiving inherently generates value, cultivates competencies, and produces richness within family life. Mothers' intentional acts of care, from managing routines to creating meaningful family experiences, enact joy, reinforce relational bonds, and affirm maternal agency. Resilience Theory (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) further illuminates how navigating structural and social challenges fosters adaptive capacities, relational skills, and emotional resourcefulness, demonstrating that caregiving itself can be generative, empowering, and skill-building.

Building on these insights, the study positions caregiving not merely as a set of obligations, but as an actual skill-generating practice that intersects with entrepreneurship, identity formation, and well-being. These findings highlight the transformative potential of caregiving, illustrating how the competencies, resilience, and affective richness developed through daily care work can extend into other domains of mothers' lives. This understanding sets the stage for concluding reflections on how joy, relationality, and caregiving-influenced entrepreneurial engagement function as mutually reinforcing forces shaping the lived experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs.

5.7 Contributions

This study contributes to existing study by weaving together insights from women's entrepreneurship, caregiving, and well-being study. Through the experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs, it reveals how caregiving practices and entrepreneurial engagement are mutually reinforcing, shaping both identity and well-being across multiple roles. The contributions unfold on three fronts: theoretical, methodological, and policy, with each emphasizing the generative potential of caregiving in fostering entrepreneurial activity and supporting holistic well-being.

5.7.1 Theoretical Contribution: Caregiving entrepreneurship

This study advances theory by introducing *caregiving entrepreneurship*, a concept that emerged from the iterative analysis of how mothers navigate their dual roles. It captures how specific skills cultivated through caregiving, such as problem-solving, emotional labour, logistical planning, and relational negotiation, translate directly into entrepreneurial practice. Drawing on enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), the findings illustrate that caregiving and entrepreneurship are mutually reinforcing. The competencies mothers develop in managing the complex demands of an AN child enhance their ability to innovate and adapt within their businesses. At the same time, resilience theory (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) highlights how adversity within caregiving contexts fosters adaptive skills applicable to entrepreneurial problem-solving (see Figure 8), while a Feminist ethics of care lens (Keller & Kittay, 2017) frames these practices as relational, morally inflected, and identity-affirming.

By linking these domains, caregiving entrepreneurship extends both literatures. The study moves women's entrepreneurship beyond traditional economic metrics to encompass identity, meaning, and subjective well-being. It emphasizes that entrepreneurial engagement is not only about market outcomes but also about emotional labour (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Baş et al., 2023). Within care scholarship, these findings challenge deficit-oriented perspectives by illustrating that caregiving practices cultivate competencies such as strategic planning and adaptive problem-solving (Keller & Kittay, 2017; Balcı et al., 2019). This conceptualization was facilitated by unique art-based approaches grounded in the interpretive tradition. By using these methods, I was able to bridge the gap between raw narrative data and theoretical synthesis, allowing the nuances of the participants' experiences to guide the formation of the caregiving entrepreneurship label.

Furthermore, this study foregrounds the affective and relational dimensions of this work. Joy, creativity, and labour are positioned as central to both entrepreneurial engagement and well-being. The experiences of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs reveal that everyday acts of care, advocacy, and problem-solving generate capacities that reinforce personal resilience, strengthen relational bonds, and affirm multiple identities (Akram et al., 2024). This relational perspective challenges traditional assumptions by positioning joy and relationality as critical dimensions of success. Taken together, these insights position caregiving entrepreneurship as a theoretical bridge linking caregiving, women's entrepreneurship, and relational well-being. By highlighting how caregiving practices generate transferable skills while fostering relational richness, the concept reframes both domains as dynamic and mutually reinforcing. Importantly, these theoretical lenses suggest the need for policy frameworks that recognize the skill-generating potential of caregiving. By positioning caregiving as central to

practice, this study provides a perspective that legitimizes mothers' contributions and underscores the potential of caregiving to shape new forms of innovation and meaning-making, see Figure 7.

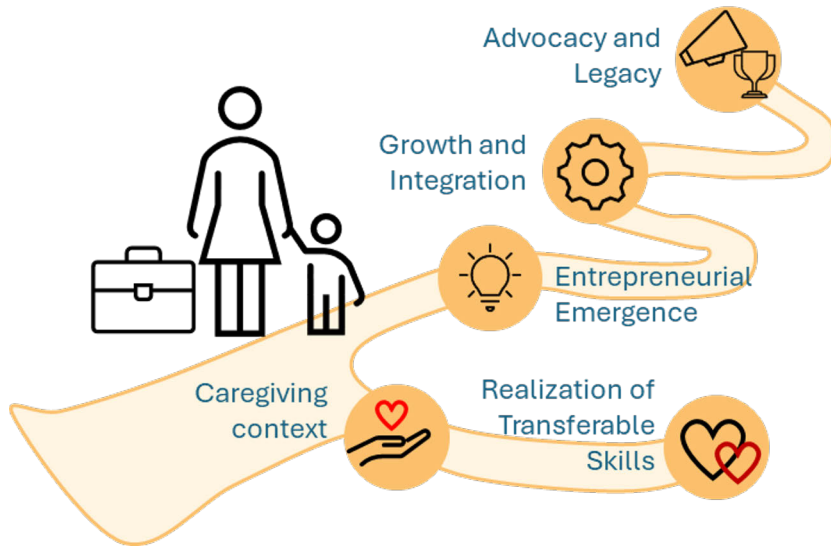


Figure 7. The path from caregiver to entrepreneur bridging concept of caregiving entrepreneurship.

5.7.2 Methodological Contribution: Individual LSP interviews

The decision to employ art-based methods was intentional, designed to create a space in which participants could feel comfortable sharing the full breadth of their lived experiences. In qualitative studies, the processes of conducting and analysing interviews are inevitably shaped by the researcher's assumptions and preconceptions, which I acknowledged from the outset. While art-based methods are increasingly recognized in qualitative studies, I had initially been unfamiliar with their use; I adopted them only after feeling limited in how I could best conduct my study. The decision represented a deliberate methodological choice to deepen engagement with participants' experiences. Furthermore, I sought a highly hands-on approach throughout the analysis process. Perhaps influenced by my own neurodivergence, the tactile engagement of working directly with data, writing notes by hand, physically moving them across tables and floors, and maintaining detailed reflective notebooks felt essential to establishing a meaningful connection with participants' interviews, observations, images, photographs, and LEGO® models. Although this approach may appear traditional or environmentally intensive, it provided a level of immersion that digital or AI-assisted methods could not replicate,

at least not to me. This embodied, reflective engagement allowed me to honour the richness, nuance, and emotional depth of participants' narratives, ensuring their voices were foregrounded and their experiences fully represented.

This desire to engage more deeply with the topic also led to methodological innovation. In addition to its theoretical and policy contributions, the study advances study methods by employing LEGO® Serious Play (LSP) in a novel, individualized format to explore sensitive issues with mother-caregivers. While traditionally used in group or organizational settings (Quinn et al., 2022; White et al., 2022), LSP was adapted here for one-on-one interviews, providing participants with a tangible and creative medium to articulate the complexities of caregiving and entrepreneurship, see Figure 8. This individualized approach enhanced psychological safety, enabling participants to express emotions, reflect on personal challenges, and engage with sensitive subjects, including caregiving for a child with additional needs, well-being, and experiences of joy without the pressure or judgment often associated with verbal-only interviews (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014; Roos et al., 2014).

The use of LSP in this context extends compassionate study methods, which emphasize ethical, empathetic engagement, prioritizing participant well-being alongside data generation (Clark et al., 2019; Leavy, 2015). By providing a visual means of expression, LSP facilitated the co-construction of meaning, supporting participants in externalizing and structuring their experiences in ways that were both accessible and empowering. This method aligns with principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) by deepening insight into lived experience while simultaneously attending to the relational and affective dimensions of storytelling (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Furthermore, this methodological approach allowed participants to engage in creative sense-making, linking their everyday caregiving practices to entrepreneurial identity, well-being dynamics, and sources of joy. The integration of visual and narrative elements made abstract concepts like resilience, joy, and relational labour visible and tangible, creating richer, more nuanced data than traditional interview methods could have captured. By demonstrating the value of individualized LSP interviews for sensitive populations, this study contributes to the expansion of art-based and compassionate methodologies in qualitative study, offering a model for future studies exploring complex, emotionally heavy phenomena.

Finally, the longitudinal nature of this study allowed for capturing participants' experiences at specific moments between 2022 and 2024, including significant life events such as divorce, remarriage, or marriage counselling, which shaped their perspectives on caregiving and entrepreneurship. While such temporal and situational changes limit the generalizability of findings, repeating one study with the same participants a year later provided insight into how well-being, identity, and

entrepreneurial practices evolve. This approach enhances the methodological contribution of the study, demonstrating how creative, participant-centred, and longitudinal methods can generate nuanced, contextually grounded, and dynamic understandings of mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs' lived experiences.

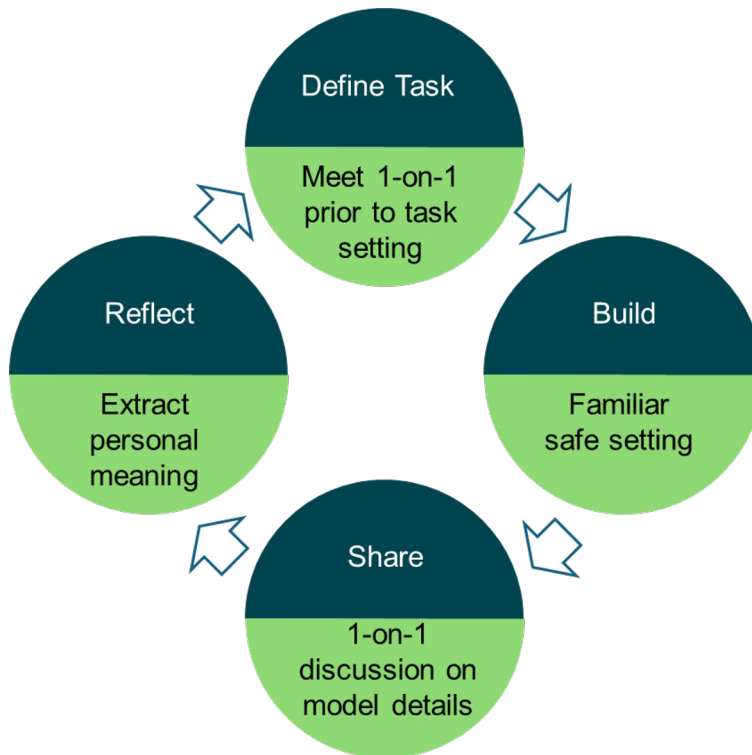


Figure 8. A schematic representation of the LPS methodology.

5.7.3 Policy contribution

The concept of caregiving entrepreneurship carries important implications for policy and practice. Recognizing caregiving as a skill-generating activity challenges traditional policy assumptions that frame caregiving solely as a burden or strain on resources see Figure 9. Instead, supporting mother-caregivers' dual roles as entrepreneurs and caregivers can enhance both family well-being and economic participation, boosting well-being for mothers and potentially their children. Policies that provide flexible work arrangements, some financial support, and access to resources for mother-caregivers could facilitate the translation of caregiving skills into entrepreneurial competencies and relational labour that could benefit families and communities alike (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Keller & Kittay, 2017).

Furthermore, interventions that acknowledge the relational and affective dimensions of caregiving, for example, programs that support peer networks, mentorship, or skill-sharing, can amplify the impact of caregiving entrepreneurship by validating invisible labour as a means to promote purpose and well-being (Baş et al., 2023; Balcı et al., 2019). By shifting policy discourse from deficit-focused narratives to frameworks that recognize the generative capacities of caregiving, stakeholders can better support mother-caregivers in sustaining both family and business life. These approaches also open avenues for the integration of joy, creativity, and identity-strengthening practices into broader socio-economic structures, enabling mother-caregivers, if they choose, to ensure that well-being and skill development are prioritized in the design of initiatives and in their implementation.

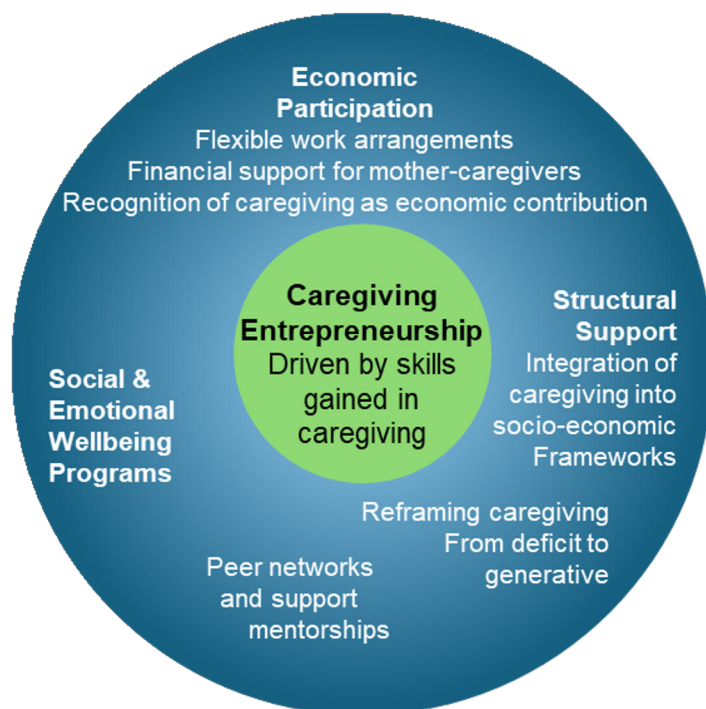


Figure 9. Policies to support the concept of caregiving entrepreneurship

By integrating insights from caregiving entrepreneurship into policy, it can highlight the potential for structural support to not only mitigate challenges faced by families with AN children but also actively enable mothers to leverage their caregiving experience in ways that enhance economic, relational, and emotional outcomes (Figure 10). Reframing positions caregiving not only as a type of labour

needing to be managed, but as a foundation for innovation and well-being/identity transformation, offering a life-altering perspective for policy, practice, and social support systems.

5.8 Limitations and Future Study Agenda

Despite employing rigorous methodological strategies, this study, like all study, has inherent limitations. I was fortunate that participants were exceptionally forthcoming with their time and generous in sharing their lived experiences. A potential limitation would have arisen had participants been more guarded, as this might have constrained the ability to capture the emotional depth and passion embedded in their narratives. While qualitative study often prioritizes depth over breadth, some may argue that the relatively small participant group could limit the transferability of findings. From an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and hermeneutic perspective, however, this sample size is advantageous, as it allows for a rich, in-depth exploration of individual experiences, supporting nuanced insights into the complex intersections of caregiving, entrepreneurship, and maternal identity (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Holroyd, 2007).

By focusing on mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs, the study allows for detailed attention to the meanings, emotions, and contextual nuances embedded in each narrative, supporting idiographic and interpretative depth as well as aiding in building trust with individual participants (Nizza, Farr, & Smith, 2021). As Smith et al. (2009, p.32) note, “in some ways the details of the individual also bring us closer to significant aspects of the general,” highlighting how this personal engagement with individual cases can be beneficial to the broader phenomena. The size of the participant group aligns with hermeneutic principles by emphasizing iterative co-construction of understanding between researcher and participant, fostering reflexivity, interpretative sensitivity, and the capacity to generate nuanced insights into caregiving, entrepreneurial engagement, and well-being.

Most participants were located in the North of the United Kingdom, where social services, policy frameworks, and cultural norms were relatively consistent, providing a coherent foundation for exploring caregiving and entrepreneurial experiences. However, as an American-Finnish researcher, I was at times at a linguistic and structural disadvantage, encountering terminology and policy differences between the Finnish system with which I am familiar and the UK context. The inclusion of two Finnish participants, though from distinct regions with differing well-being services from those with which I am familiar, offered valuable comparative insights without substantially altering the overall patterns observed. In fact, the Finnish participants represented contexts divergent from each other, adding an extra layer of complexity to the findings across socio-cultural and service

environments. While these findings are contextually situated and may not be fully transferable to all settings, the consistency across cases reinforces the validity of the emergent themes and highlights their relevance to caregiving entrepreneurship and maternal well-being in broader international contexts.

Considering the methodology, these interpretive, qualitative approaches were used to generate a rich yet contextual understanding of generalizability. This has yielded nuanced insights; however, it limits the ability to make broad, population-level claims. As a researcher, this is not seen as a limitation, but rather as providing insights that cannot be achieved through other methods, such as surveys, to obtain such richness.

Being an insider researcher further strengthened the study's interpretive depth. My positionality as a mother-caregiver-(former) entrepreneur facilitated trust and shared understanding, enabling participants to articulate their experiences that may have remained unspoken in the presence of an outsider (Saidin, 2016; Unluer, 2012). While insider status introduces potential biases, ongoing reflexive practices ensured careful monitoring of interpretation, ultimately leveraging my proximity to the topic as a methodological strength. Combined with a small, contextually situated participant group, this approach allowed for a rich, idiographic exploration of how caregiving and entrepreneurial engagement intersect, producing insights that extend beyond the individual cases to illuminate broader theoretical, well-being, and identity-related phenomena.

Considering the longitudinal nature of the study, the data captured represent specific moments within participants' caregiving and entrepreneurial journeys between 2022 and 2024. During this period, several participants experienced significant life events, including divorce, remarriage, or marriage counselling, which inevitably influenced their perspectives and experiences throughout this time period. Such temporal and situational changes highlight the dynamic nature of caregiving and entrepreneurial engagement, placing limitations on the findings across time.

While Lego® Serious Play (LSP) and Photovoice sessions enabled participants to express the complex and emotionally charged experiences, individual comfort with visual and symbolic forms of expression varied. Some were familiar with these types of methods, while others had limited exposure to these methods, yet adapted quickly without having encountered them before. Although somewhat unconventional, these methods were intentionally chosen to facilitate engagement with sensitive topics, allowing participants to communicate experiences that might be difficult to articulate through direct questioning alone. This was achieved successfully through engagement with the methods throughout the interviews. This approach also facilitated deliberate reflection and a pause for self-examination and reflection, even if, as with our LSP session, just for an hour during our time together, which encouraged engagement with the study questions (Clarke & Holt, 2017). The

results indicated these methods support the emergence of themes and the co-creation of meaning from their lived experiences within the time allocated for the interviews and the taking of/selecting photos.

Lastly, despite layered reflexivity, the interpretive lens inevitably shapes how participants' narratives are framed and understood. The co-construction of meaning is influenced by the researcher's assumptions and the dialogic process, which may limit claims to complete objectivity while simultaneously enriching the depth and nuance of the analysis. By explicitly acknowledging these methodological considerations, this study maintains rigor while presenting findings as contextually situated, emotionally rich insights rather than making broad, unsubstantiated statements.

Considering future directions, additional study could examine how caregiving entrepreneurship manifests across diverse socio-cultural and policy contexts, capturing the influence of local norms, support structures, and legislative frameworks on mothers' experiences. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable, exploring how motherhood, caregiving, and entrepreneurial identity evolve over extended periods, and how joy and resilience sustain well-being over time. Future studies could also incorporate the perspectives of grown AN children, offering insights into the intergenerational impact of caregiving and entrepreneurial practices. To enhance generalizability, large-scale studies could be undertaken, ideally including participants who are native to the area and native speakers aligned with the researcher's linguistic skills, facilitating richer contextual understanding and more nuanced interpretation. Such study would further illuminate the transformative potential of caregiving in shaping entrepreneurial practices, while reinforcing feminist perspectives on work, care, and identity.

6 Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of how caregiving and entrepreneurship are intricately intertwined. Illuminated through this study is the interconnection of these roles and how mothers navigate well-being, identity, and relational meaning, with joy emerging as a pivotal and transformative element. Caregiving is not incidental; resilience is not a given. Through the everyday acts of care, advocacy, and loving in ways that break their hearts, mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs navigate through innumerable constraints, transforming challenges into opportunities for resilience, relational growth, and personal fulfilment. By situating these practices within feminist frameworks, the study highlights how entrepreneurship and caregiving are embedded in broader gendered and social structures, challenging normative assumptions about work, productivity, and maternal care labour. Rather than conforming to deficit-oriented narratives, this study highlights how a mother's engagement in entrepreneurial activity translates into how care, relationality, and emotional labour are generative, skill-building, and identity-affirming. These forces disrupt traditional narratives and open alternative pathways for personal agency.

Drawing from a relational ontology grounded in the Feminist Ethics of Care, this study conceptualizes caregiving not as an external constraint but as a generative site of growth and identity transformation. This foundational perspective is further supported and operationalized through the analytical mechanisms of enrichment theory and resilience theory. Caregiving entrepreneurship emerges as a conceptual bridge linking women's entrepreneurship, caregiving, and identity and well-being. It underscores that entrepreneurship is not merely a financial endeavour but a socially and emotionally embedded practice, deeply connected to maternal responsibilities and the affective labour of care. I haven't (yet) uncovered all I could regarding mother-caregiver-entrepreneurs. I can only hope to continue my work and pass the torch to other future researchers, so that they can examine how caregiving entrepreneurship unfolds across diverse socio-cultural and policy contexts. Studies exploring longitudinally how motherhood, caregiving, and entrepreneurial identity evolve over extended periods would prove, in my opinion, to be very useful in understanding how complexities evolve over individual lifetimes and through

generations, perhaps. Investigating the perspectives of grown AN children could further illuminate how joy and resilience sustain well-being. Such studies would deepen an understanding of the transformative potential of caregiving in shaping entrepreneurial practices, while reinforcing feminist perspectives on work, care, and identity. Lastly, I wish to highlight an additional *hope* for future studies that could extend this work by examining mother-created businesses intentionally designed around care, inclusion, and purpose, where AN children might actively participate and flourish. As Nick Cave (2021) reflects in *The Red Hand Files*:

“Hope rises out of known suffering and is the defiant and dissenting spark that refuses to be extinguished.”

This sentiment captures the resilience and determination of the women in this study, women just like me, for whom hope, and joy are inseparable forces. These forces are created in spaces of defiance, where healing and growth emerge through advocacy, entrepreneurial endeavours, and in the everyday practices of family life. Hope and joy endure as testaments to maternal resilience, the voices that refuse to be silenced, and a relentless pursuit to better the lives of their children, guiding them forward when perseverance is the only path.

Abbreviations

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AN	Additional Needs
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
LSP	Lego® Serious Play®
PDA	Pathological Demand Avoidance

List of References

- Aceves, T., & Black, L. (2024). Leading the fight: an African American mother advocating for her children with disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(12), 2958-2979.
- Ahl, H. (2006). Why study on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 595–621. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2006.00138.x>
- Ahl, H., & Marlow, S. (2012). Exploring the dynamics of gender, feminism and entrepreneurship: advancing debate to escape a dead end?. *Organization*, 19(5), 543-562.
- Akram, B., Batool, M., & Bibi, A. (2019). Burden of care and suicidal ideation among mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder: Perceived social support as a moderator. *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association*, 69 (4), 504-508
- Alon, R. (2025). Examining the Acceptance of Siblings With Down Syndrome Through a Positive Psychological Lens. *Study and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 15407969251350121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15407969251350121>
- Alsaigh, R. and Coyne, I. (2021), “Doing a hermeneutic phenomenology study underpinned by Gadamer’s philosophy: A framework to facilitate data analysis”, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 20, pp. 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211047820>
- Al-Saliti, R. A. M. N., AL-Karamneh, M. S., Tarawneh, H., Elmorsy, G. N., Badran, A. H. A., & Ismail, A. F. Spiritual Intelligence and Its Relationship to Marital Satisfaction among Mothers of Children with Disabilities.
- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2020). The problematizing review: A counterpoint to Elsbach and Van Knippenberg’s argument for integrative reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(6), 1290–1304. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12582>
- Ammari, T., & Schoenebeck, S. (2015). Networked empowerment on Facebook groups for parents of children with special needs. In *Proceedings of the 33rd annual ACM conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 2805-2814). <https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702324>
- Amorim, V., Moreira, A. C., de Sousa Lopes, B., & Rua, O. (2025). Mumpreneurship: what is known, how it is known and future agenda. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*.
- Anderson, Kate, Elaina Elder-Robinson, Kirsten Howard, and Gail Garvey. n.d. “A Systematic Methods Review of Photovoice Study with Indigenous Young People.” Regular Article *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22:1–37. Accessed April 30, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231172076>.
- Arif, A., Ashraf, F., & Nusrat, A. (2021). Stress and coping strategies in parents of children with special needs. *Labour*, 32, 20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.1069>
- Anglin, A. H., Kincaid, P. A., Short, J. C., & Allen, D. G. (2022). Role theory perspectives: Past, present, and future applications of role theories in management study. *Journal of Management*, 48(6), 1469–1502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206322108486>
- Audretsch DB, Kuratko DF and Link AN (2015) Making sense of the elusive paradigm of entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics* 45: 703–71. RL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43896039>

- Auldridge, A. L. (2025). *Opportunities Beyond the Cliff: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Caregivers of Children With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Who Seek Business Creation as a Pathway to Meaningful Employment* (Doctoral study, Hood College).
- Aykara, A., & Albayrak, H. (2025). "Employees Without Fixed Shifts": Lessons Learned from Pandemic Experiences of Mothers Who Have Disabled Children. *Journal of Social Service Study*, 51(2), 635-656. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2024.2431576>
- Ayyildiz, C., Geibel, O., Herff, S. A., Hashim, S., Eerola, T., & Küssner, M. B. (2025). Music as social surrogate? A qualitative analysis of older adults' choices of music to alleviate loneliness. *Musicae Scientiae*, 10298649251319403. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10298649251319403>
- Bagheri, Afsaneh, Golshan Javadian, Pardis Zakeri, and Zahra Arasti. "Bearing the unbearable: Exploring women entrepreneurs resilience building in times of crises." *Journal of Business Ethics* 193, no. 3 (2024): 715-738. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05577-9>
- Balcı, S., Kızıl, H., Savaşer, S., Dur, Ş., & Mutlu, B. (2019). Determining the burdens and difficulties faced by families with intellectually disabled children. *Journal of Psychiatric Nursing*, 10 (2), 124-130.
- Baldwin, A., Capper, T., & Naughton, S. (2025). My 'normal' isn't your normal... What is maternal well-being? A scoping review. *Midwifery*, 141, 104250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2024.104250>
- Baker, D. L., & Drapela, L. A. (2010). Mostly the mother: Concentration of adverse employment effects on mothers of children with autism. *Social Science Journal*, 47(3), 578-592. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2010.01.013>
- Barbosa, M. A. M., Chaud, M. N., & Gomes, M. M. F. (2008). Experiences of mothers of disabled children: a phenomenological study. *Acta Paulista de Enfermagem*, 21, 46-52. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-21002008000100007>
- Barrett, P., Butler, M., & Hale, B. (2016). Ethical issues in family care today. In *Ethical issues in family care today* (pp. 68-85). <https://doi.org/10.1891/0739-6686.34>
- Barnett, D., Clements, M., Kaplan-Estrin, M., & Fialka, J. (2003). Building new dreams: Supporting parents' adaptation to their child with special needs. *Infants & Young Children*, 16(3), 184-200.
- Barratt, M., Lewis, P., Duckworth, N., Jojo, N., Malecka, V., Tomsone, S., ... & Wilson, N. J. (2025). Parental Experiences of Quality of Life When Caring for Their Children With Intellectual Disability: A Meta-Aggregation Systematic Review. *Journal of Applied Study in Intellectual Disabilities*, 38(1), e70005.
- Baş, N. G., Karatay, G., & Baş, K. (2023). Relationship between loneliness, hopelessness and social support experienced by mothers with disabled children. *LIFE SPAN AND DISABILITY*, 93.
- Bayat, M. (2007). "Empowerment through caregiving: The emotional journey of mothers with children with special needs", *Journal of Disability Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 19-33.
- Beckett, C. (2025). Conceptual Contours of Caregiving, Burden, Expertise and Flourishing.
- Beighton, C., & Wills, J. (2019). How parents describe the positive aspects of parenting their child who has intellectual disabilities: A systematic review and narrative synthesis. *Journal of applied study in intellectual disabilities*, 32(5), 1255-1279. DOI: 10.1111/jar.12617
- Bell, K. (2013). Participants' motivations and co-construction of the qualitative study process. *Qualitative Social Work*, 12(4), 523-539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325011429020>
- Bekhet, A. K. (2023). Theoretical substruction of resilience theory: Dementia caregivers' burden and their care recipients' behavior. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 36(1), 64-69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08943184221131967>
- Beham, B., Drobníč, S., Präg, P., Baierl, A., & Lewis, S. (2020). Work-to-family enrichment and gender inequalities in eight European countries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(5), 589-610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1355837>
- Bennett, C. R., Weaver, C., Coats, H. L., & Hendricks-Ferguson, V. L. (2024). "Music Played a Role in Saving My Life and Getting Me Through All of This": A Descriptive Qualitative Study of Hope

- in Adolescents and Young Adults Living With Advanced Cancer. *Journal of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nursing*, 41(6), 399–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/275275302412>
- Blacher, J., & Baker, B. L. (2007). Positive impact of intellectual disability on families. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 112(5), 330–348. [https://doi.org/10.1352/0895-8017\(2007\)112](https://doi.org/10.1352/0895-8017(2007)112)
- Blenkinsopp, J. and Owens, G. (2010), “At the heart of things: The role of the ‘married’ couple in entrepreneurship and family business”, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/13552551011071850>
- Blum, L. M. (2007). Mother-blame in the Prozac nation: Raising kids with invisible disabilities. *Gender & Society*, 21(2), 202–226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243207299185>
- Boyd, S. B. (2010). Autonomy for mothers? relational theory and parenting apart. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 18(2), 137-158. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-010-9152-3>
- Bozkur, B., Güler, M., & Kandeger, A. (2022). The mediating role of maternal resilience in the relationship between internalized sexism and couple burnout in mothers of children with disabilities. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 44(4), 680–693. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-022-09468-7>
- Bradshaw, S., Bem, D., Shaw, K., Taylor, B., Chiswell, C., Salama, M., Bassett, E., Kaur, G., & Cummins, C. (2019). Improving health, well-being and parenting skills in parents of children with special health care needs and medical complexity - A scoping review. *BMC Pediatrics*, 19(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/S12887-019-1648-7/TABLES/4>
- Branca, E., Intenza, M., & Doni, F. (2025). Startup entrepreneurs’ personality traits and resilience: unveiling the interplay of prior experience. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 21(1), 2
- Brandon, P. (2007). Time away from “smelling the roses”: Where do mothers raising children with disabilities find the time to work? *Social Science & Medicine*, 65(4), 667–679. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.04.022>
- Brayda, W. C., & Boyce, T. D. (2014). So you really want to interview me?: Navigating “sensitive” qualitative study interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13(1), 318–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300115>
- Burles, Meridith, and Roanne Thomas. 2014. “‘I Just Don’t Think There’s Any Other Image That Tells the Story like [This] Picture Does’: Researcher and Participant Reflections on the Use of Participant-Employed Photography in Social Study.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 13 (1): 185–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300107/FORMAT/EPUB>.
- Butler, T. (1998). Towards a hermeneutic method for interpretive study in information systems. *Journal of information technology*, 13(4), 285-300.
- Capous-Desyllas, Moshoula, and Nicole F. Bromfield. 2018. “Using an Arts-Informed Eclectic Approach to Photovoice Data Analysis.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917752189>
- Cardenas, J. F., & Colwell, M. J. (2024). Maternal Well-Being and the Transition to Childcare: Impact of Caregiver Support. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 56(1), 41-57.
- Casteleijn-Osorno, R. (2024). Uncovering well-being: The complex realities of mompreneurs with additional needs children through Lego® Serious Play®. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 22, e00499. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2024.e00499>
- Casteleijn-Osorno, R. and Hytti, U. (2025), “Mompreneurship and resilience: Exploring entrepreneurship for mothers of children with additional needs”, *BRQ Business Study Quarterly*, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/23409444251315485/FORMAT/EPUB>
- Cave, N. (1997). Are you the one that I’ve been waiting for? On The Boatman’s Call [CD]. Mute Records.
- Cave, N. (2021, May 19). Do you have hope? The Red Hand Files. <https://www.theredhandfiles.com/do-you-have-hope/>
- Chen, Y., Zhang, L., Zhang, S., Zhang, J., Yu, H., Li, Q., & Zhou, Y. (2025). Prevalence and sociodemographic configurations of anxiety and depression among caregivers of individuals with

- mental illness: A meta-analysis and qualitative comparative analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 375, 486-495.
- Cheng, S., & Lai, Y. (2023). Parental stress in families of children with special educational needs: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, 10449392. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.10449392>
- Choe, D., Barrett, C. A., Kwon, J., & Bagasrawala, L. (2023). Immigrant mothers as advocates: Understanding how Korean immigrant mothers of children with disabilities navigate special education in the USA. *School Psychology International*, 45(2), 133-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343231194730>
- Chou, Y. C., Wang, S. C., Chang, H. H., & Fu, L. Y. (2014). Working but not employed: Mothers of adults with intellectual disability as hidden workers. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 39(4), 353-362. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13668250.2014.940862>
- Chou, Y.-C., Kröger, T., & Pu, C.-Y. (2018). Underemployment among mothers of children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Study in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31(1), 152-158. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12336>
- Clarke, J., & Holt, R. (2017). Imagery of ad-venture: Understanding entrepreneurial identity through metaphor and drawing. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 32(5), 476-497. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2017.06.001>
- Cleary, M., West, S., & Mclean, L. (2023). From 'refrigerator mothers' to empowered advocates: The evolution of the autism parent. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 44(1), 64-70.
- Cohen, P. N., & Petrescu-Prahova, M. (2006). Gendered living arrangements among children with disabilities. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(3), 630-638.
- Collett, J. L. (2005). What kind of mother am I? Impression management and the social construction of motherhood. *Symbolic Interaction*, 28(3), 327-347.
- Colker, R. (2015). Blaming mothers: A disability perspective. *BUL Rev.*, 95, 1205.
- Costanzo, M. A., & Magnuson, K. (2024). Child care access for families raising children with disabilities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 156, 107377.
- Coughlin, M. B., & Sethares, K. A. (2017). Chronic sorrow in parents of children with a chronic illness or disability: An integrative literature review. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 37, 108-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2017.06.011>
- Crettenden, A., Wright, A., & Skinner, N. (2014). Mothers caring for children and young people with developmental disabilities: Intent to work, patterns of participation in paid employment and the experience of workplace flexibility. *Community, Work & Family*, 17(3), 244-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2014.923816>
- Czapanskiy, K. S. (2012). Disabled Kids and Their Moms: Caregivers and Horizontal Equity. *Geo. J. on Poverty L. & Pol'y*, 19, 43.
- Darwin Holmes, A. G. (2020). Researcher positionality – A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative study: A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232>
- Deming, S. M. (2023). "In every decision I'm making, I'm thinking about my son": How children motivate and constrain the labor force participation of mothers with disabilities. *Families in Society*, 104(2), 179-195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10443894221134148>
- Deng, W., Zhou, W., Song, R., Li, J., & Zhang, J. (2025). Female entrepreneurship: systematic literature review and study framework. *Chinese Management Studies*.
- Dillon-Wallace, J. A., McDonagh, S. H., & Fordham, L. A. (2013). How stable is the well-being of Australian mothers who care for young children with special health care needs? *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(9), 1215-1226. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9782-6>
- Dijkstra, M., & Rommes, E. (2022). Dealing with disability: challenges in Dutch health care of parents with a non-Western migration background and a child with a developmental disability. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 44(23), 7178-7189. DOI:10.1080/09638288.2021.1985637

- Doğruel, F. (2025). Caring bodies: Women's invisible labor and Gendered Caregiving in Turkish Disability context. *Anduli: revista andaluza de ciencias sociales*, (28), 177-196.
- Doonan, C. (2022). There's no formula for a good mother: shame and estranged maternal labour. *Feminist Theory*, 23(4), 512-538.
- Duberley, J., & Carrigan, M. (2013). The career identities of “mumpreneurs”: Women’s experiences of combining enterprise and motherhood. *International Small Business Journal*, 31(6), 629–651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242611435182>
- Dubois, C. (2019). Work–family balance of self-employed women with children: The role of gendered work–family policies. *Community, Work & Family*, 22(4), 391–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2019.1595818>
- Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Cross, A. H. (1986). Mediating influences of social support: personal, family, and child outcomes. *American journal of mental deficiency*, 90(4), 403-417.
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative study. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 8(1), 54-63.
- Eaton, K., Ohan, J. L., Stritzke, W. G., & Corrigan, P. W. (2016). Failing to meet the good parent ideal: Self-stigma in parents of children with mental health disorders. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(10), 3109-3123. DOI 10.1007/s10826-016-0459-9
- Eddleston, K. A., & Powell, G. N. (2008). The role of gender and work-family conflict in entrepreneurial outcomes. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 23(4), 503–522. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2007.04.002>
- Eichner, M. (2005). Dependency and the liberal polity: on Martha Fineman's the autonomy myth. *Calif. L. Rev.*, 93, 1285. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3481471>
- Eisner, Elliot. "Persistent tensions in arts-based study." *Arts-based study in education: Foundations for practice* (2008): 16-27.
- England, E., & Henley, J. (2024). ‘It Matters How They See You’: ‘Maternal Activation’ As a Strategy to Navigate Contradictory Discourses of Motherhood and Neoliberal Activism in the Welsh Homelessness System. *Social Policy and Society*, 1-14.
- Ekinsmyth, C. (2013). Managing the business of everyday life: The roles of space and place in “mumpreneurship”. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Study*, 19(5), 525-546.
- Esdaile, S. A. (2009). Valuing difference: caregiving by mothers of children with disabilities. *Occupational therapy international*, 16(2), 122-133. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oti.274>
- Fernández-Alcántara, M., Correa-Delgado, C., Muñoz, Á., Salvatierra, M. T., Fuentes-Hélices, T., & Laynez-Rubio, C. (2017). Parenting a child with a learning disability: A qualitative approach. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 64(5), 526–543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2017.1325096>
- Finardi, G., Palcari, F. G., & Fincham, F. D. (2022). Parenting a child with learning disabilities: Mothers’ self-forgiveness, well-being, and parental behaviors. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31(9), 2454-2471. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02395-x>
- Florian, V., & Krulik, T. (1991). Loneliness and social support of mothers of chronically ill children. *Social Science & Medicine*, 32(11), 1291-1296. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(91\)90045-E](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(91)90045-E)
- Foss, L. (2010). Study on entrepreneur networks: The case for a constructionist feminist theory perspective. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 83-102.
- Foster, Kirk A., Brittany Davis, and Andrew Foell. "Innovations to photovoice: Using smartphones & social media." *Urban affairs review* 59, no. 5 (2023): 1728-1744.
- Fuller, S., & Hirsh, C. E. (2019). “Family-friendly” jobs and motherhood pay penalties: The impact of flexible work arrangements across the educational spectrum. *Work and Occupations*, 46(1), 3–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888418771116>
- Gadamer, H. G. (2004). *Philosophical hermeneutics* (D. E. Linge, Trans., 2nd ed.). University of California Press. (Original work published 1967–1972)
- Garwood, E. (2014). Regulating motherhood: A Foucauldian analysis of the social construction of the mother. *The New Birmingham Review*, 1(1), 19-28.

- Gauntlett, D. (2014), "The LEGO System as a tool for thinking, creativity, and changing the world", in: *Lego Studies* (pp. 189-205), Routledge.
- Geist, C., & Ruppanner, L. (2018). Mission impossible? New housework theories for changing families. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10(1), 242-262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12245>.
- Hansen, H., & Trank, C. Q. (2016). This is going to hurt: Compassionate study methods. *Organizational Study Methods*, 19(3), 352-375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428116637195>
- Goff, B. S., High, J., Cless, A., Koblitz, K., Staats, N., & Springer, N. (2017). Families with special needs: A journey from coping and adaptation to resilience and hope. In P. C. McKenry & S. J. Price (Eds.), *Families & change: Coping with stressful events and transitions* (5th ed., pp. 432–455). SAGE Publications.
- Global Disability Summit. (2025). *Global Disability Inclusion Report: Accelerating disability inclusion in a changing and diverse world*. Global Disability Summit [Report]
- Go, J. (2025). Bureaucratic burdens and bureaucratic injustice. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 13691481251350479. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481251350479>
- Groundar, P. R. (2025). Researcher Positionality: ways to include it in a qualitative study design. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24, 16094069251321251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069251321251>
- Graham, H. (1983). Caring: A labour of love. In J. Finch & D. Groves (Eds.), *A labour of love: Women, work and caring* (pp. 13–30). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Green, S. E. (2003). "What do you mean 'what's wrong with her?'": Stigma and the lives of families of children with disabilities. *Social science & medicine*, 57(8), 1361-1374. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(02\)00511-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00511-7)
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of management review*, 31(1), 72-92. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20159186>
- Grondin, J. (2017). What is the hermeneutical circle? In N. Keane & C. Lawn (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to hermeneutics* (rev. ed., pp. 299–305). Blackwell.
- Gross, M. S., Mendoza-Cervantes, D., Zabec, J. L., Dewan, A., & Beach, M. C. (2025). Stigmatizing mothers: Qualitative analysis of language in prenatal records. *Narrative Inquiry in Bioethics*.
- Güçlü, O., & Hürmeýdan, C. E. (2024). Being the mother of a special child: Resilience and marital adjustment in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Psychiatry and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 34(1), 64.
- Gumas, E. D., Gunja, M. Z., & Williams, R. D. (2025, August 25). The unequal weight of caregiving: Women shoulder the responsibility in 10 countries. *The Commonwealth Fund*. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/blog/2024/unequal-weight-caregiving-women-shoulder-responsibility-10-countries>
- Guralnik, D. B. (Ed.). (1984). *Webster's New World Dictionary* (2nd ed.). New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Hamilton, E. (2013). The discourse of entrepreneurial masculinities (and femininities). *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 25(1-2), 90-99.
- Hansen, H. and Trank, C.Q. (2016), "This is going to hurt: Compassionate study methods", *Organizational Study Methods*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 352–375.
- Hanser, W. E., ter Bogt, T. F., Van den Tol, A. J., Mark, R. E., & Vingerhoets, A. J. (2016). Consolation through music: A survey study. *Musicae Scientiae*, 20(1), 122-137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864915620264>
- Hastings, R. P. (2016). Do children with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a negative impact on other family members? The case for rejecting a negative narrative. *International review of study in developmental disabilities*, 50, 165-194.
- Hayes, S. A., & Watson, S. L. (2013). The impact of parenting stress: A meta-analysis of studies comparing the experience of parenting stress in parents of children with and without autism

- spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 43(3), 629–642. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-012-1604-y>
- Hayes, C., & Graham, Y. (2019). Understanding the building of professional identities with the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method using situational mapping and analysis. *Human Resource Development International*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-05-2019-0069>
- Haynie, J. M., & Shepherd, D. (2011). Toward a theory of discontinuous career transition: Investigating career transitions necessitated by traumatic life events. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 501–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021450>
- Hazan-Liran, B., & Levkovich, I. (2025). The Weight of Loneliness: Family Resilience and Social Support Among Parents of Children with and Without Special Needs. *Social Sciences*, 14(9), 531. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14090531>
- Hauser, R. M., Springer, K. W., & Pudrovska, T. (2005, November). Temporal structures of psychological well-being: continuity or change. In *Meetings of the Gerontological Society of America*, Orlando, Florida (pp. 1-30).
- Healey-Ogden, M. J., & Austin, W. J. (2011). Uncovering the lived experience of well-being. *Qualitative Health Study*, 21(1), 85-96. DOI: 10.1177/1049732310379113
- Heidegger, M. (1976). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Harper & Row. (Original work published 1927)
- Heiman, T. (2017). The internet forums as tool for coping and consultation of mothers' with their child with adhd. *Psychology Study*, 7(1), 29-41. doi:10.17265/2159-5542/2017.01.003
- Heiman, T. (2002). Parents of children with disabilities: Resilience, coping, and future expectations. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 14(2), 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015197611435>
- Heino, E., & Lillrank, A. (2022). Experiences among migrant parents with a disabled child when interacting with professionals: recognition as an inclusionary and exclusionary mechanism in Finnish public health and social services. *Disability & Society*, 37(7), 1197-1215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1867507>
- Hennekam, S., Kulkarni, M., & Laura. (2025). Indirectly disabled yet empowered by revealing vulnerability. *Work, Employment and Society*, 39(4), 1022–1031. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170251336941>
- Hengstebeck, N. D. (2017). *Childrearing, Gender, and Well-Being in Cross-National Context*. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Hemming, E., & Akhurst, J. (2009). Mothers' life-worlds in a developing context when a child has special needs. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 9(1), 1-12.
- Heskiau, R., & McCarthy, J. M. (2021). A work–family enrichment intervention: Transferring resources across life domains. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(10), 1573. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000833>
- Higgins-Desbiolles, Freya, and Manjit Monga. "Transformative change through events business: A feminist ethic of care analysis of building the purpose economy." In *Events and Sustainability*, pp. 251-269. Routledge, 2022. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2020.1856857
- Holcomb-McCoy, C., & Bryan, J. (2010). Advocacy and empowerment in parent consultation: Implications for theory and practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 88(3), 259-268. DOI:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2010.tb00021.x
- Holroyd, A. E. M. (2007). Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology: Clarifying understanding. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 7(2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2007.11433946>
- Holt, A. (2024). 'I'm his safe space': Mothers' Experiences of Physical Violence From Their Neurodivergent Children—Gender, Conflict and the Ethics of Care. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 64(4), 811-826.

- Home, A., & Webster, I. (2006). What helps or makes it harder? Influences on maternal role quality in women caring for children with invisible disabilities. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue canadienne de service social*, 59-76.
- Home, A. (2008). All in a day's carework: A typical day mothering children with invisible disabilities. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Study and Community Involvement*.
- Hoyle, Jessica N, Jan Warren-Findlow, Lauren Wallace, James N Laditka, and Sarah B Laditka. 2024. "It's Not Like a One-Way Street': Using Photovoice to Understand How College Students With Intellectual Disability Experience Interdependence." *Journal of Applied Study in Intellectual Disabilities* 37:13297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13297>
- Huang, S., Li, X., & Dong, D. (2024). Negotiating work and care in Chinese families of children with autism: Reframing mothers' narratives through a social-relational lens. *Disability & society*, 39(11), 2835-2856. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2023.2227330>
- Hughes, B., McKie, L., Hopkins, D., & Watson, N. (2005). Love's labours lost? Feminism, the disabled people's movement and an ethic of care. *Sociology*, 39(2), 259-275. DOI: 10.1177/0038038505050538
- Hulen, E. (2022). What is natural is best: A qualitative exploration of women's engagement in attachment parenting. *Journal of family issues*, 43(2), 405-417.
- Jennings, J. E., & Brush, C. G. (2013). Study on women entrepreneurs: Challenges to (and from) the broader entrepreneurship literature? *Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 663-715. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2013.782190>
- Jyoti, A., Gupta, P., Manish, T., Khushwinder, A., & Prashant Singh, A. (2023). Caregiver burden among primary caregivers of children with intellectual development disorder and its association with perceived stress. *NeuroQuantology*, 21(6), 96-104. <https://doi.org/10.14704/nq.2023.21.6.NQ88062>
- Kamila, Ami, Widyawati Widyawati, Mubasysyir Hasanbasri, and Mohammad Hakimi. "Capturing the HIV-related social exclusion practices experienced by key populations through photovoice: an interpretative phenomenological study." *Reproductive Health* 21, no. 1 (2024): 107.
- Kanagaratnam, P. (2023). *The Lived Experience of International Educators Working in Mid-Atlantic K-8 Schools: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study* (Doctoral study, The George Washington University).
- Kaniamattam, M., & Oxley, J. (2022). Unpacking the varied roles of mothers of children with developmental disabilities in South India. *Disability & society*, 37(1), 38-62.
- Kaplan, A., Sabbah-Karkabi, M., & Herzog, H. (2020). "When I iron my son's shirt, I feel my maternal role": Making women's invisible work visible. *Journal of Family Issues*, 41(9), 1525-1545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19894351>
- Karcher, K., McCuaig, J., & King-Hill, S. (2024). (Self-) reflection/reflexivity in sensitive, qualitative study: A scoping review. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 23, 16094069241261860. DOI: 10.1177/16094069241261860
- Kašperová E, Kitching J and Blackburn R (2018) Identity as a causal power: Contextualizing entrepreneurs' concerns. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation* 19(4): 237-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465750318763213>
- Kearney, P. M., & Griffin, T. (2001). Between joy and sorrow: Being a parent of a child with developmental disability. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 34(5), 582-592. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2001.01787.x>
- Keary, A. (2025). Religious women: a feminist ethics of care, caring and care-giving. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 47(2), 89-99.
- Keller, J., & Kittay, E. F. (2017). Feminist ethics of care. In *The Routledge companion to feminist philosophy* (pp. 540-555). Routledge.
- Kelly, M. (2009). Women's voluntary childlessness: a radical rejection of motherhood?. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 37(2), 157-172.

- Khanlou, N., Haque, N., Sheehan, S., & Jones, G. (2015). "It is an issue of not knowing where to go": service providers' perspectives on challenges in accessing social support and services by immigrant mothers of children with disabilities. *Journal of immigrant and minority health*, 17(6), 1840-1847. DOI:10.1007/s10903-014-0122-8
- Kibria, N., & Becerra, W. S. (2021). Deserving immigrants and good advocate mothers: Immigrant mothers' negotiations of special education systems for children with disabilities. *Social problems*, 68(3), 591-607.
- Kim, K. M., & Hwang, S. K. (2019). Being a 'good' mother: Immigrant mothers of disabled children. *International Social Work*, 62(4), 1198-1212.
- Kittay, E. F. (2001). When caring is just and justice is caring: Justice and mental retardation. *Public Culture*, 13(3), 557-579.
- Kittay, E. F. (2002). When caring is just and justice is caring: Justice and mental retardation. In E. F. Kittay & E. K. Feder (Eds.), *The subject of care: Feminist perspectives on dependency* (pp. 257-276). Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Klajmon-Lech, U. (2024). Experience of discrimination among mothers of children with disability/illness. An intersectional perspective. *Edukacja Międzykulturowa*, 27(4), 141-153. DOI: 10.15804/em.2024.04.10
- Knight, K. (2013). The changing face of the 'good mother': Trends in study into families with a child with intellectual disability, and some concerns. *Disability & Society*, 28(5), 660-673.
- Korsgaard, S. (2007). Mompreneurship as a challenge to the growth ideology of entrepreneurship. *Kontur-Tidsskrift for Kulturstudier*, 16, 42-46.
- Kriszan, A., & Nienaber, B. (2024). Studying playfully? Assessing the applicability of LEGO® serious Play® for studying vulnerable groups. *Societies*, 14(2), 15. DOI:10.3390/soc14020015
- Kulik, L., Shilo-Levin, S., & Liberman, G. (2015). Multiple roles, role satisfaction, and sense of meaning in life: An extended examination of role enrichment theory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 23(1), 137-151.
- Kumari, R., Ray, T. K., Laskar, A. R., & Majumdar, R. (2025). Psychosocial Burden in Parents Having Intellectually Disabled Children: A Hospital-based Study. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 50(1), 90-92.
- Ladd-Taylor, M., & Umansky, L. (Eds.). (1998). "Bad" mothers: The politics of blame in twentieth-century America. NYU Press.
- Lalvani, P., & Hale, C. (2015). Squeaky wheels, mothers from hell, and CEOs of the IEP: Parents, privilege, and the "fight" for inclusive education. *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege*, 5(2), 21-41.
- Lang, C. P., Boucaut, A., Guppy, M., & Johnston, L. M. (2021). Children with cerebral palsy: A cross-sectional study of their sleep and their caregiver's sleep quality, psychological health and well-being. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 47(6), 859-868. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12897>
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based study practice* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Lehner-Mear, R. (2021). Good mother, bad mother?: Maternal identities and cyber-agency in the primary school homework debate. *Gender and Education*, 33(3), 285-305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2020.1763920>
- Levine, K. A. (2009). Against all odds: Resilience in single mothers of children with disabilities. *Social work in health care*, 48(4), 402-419.
- Lewis, P. (2010). 'Mumpreneurs': revealing the post-feminist entrepreneur. In *Revealing and concealing gender: Issues of visibility in organizations* (pp. 124-138). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Lewis, S., Kagan, C., Heaton, P., & Cranshaw, M. (1999). Economic and psychological benefits from employment: The experiences and perspectives of mothers of disabled children. *Disability & Society*, 14(4), 561-575. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599926127>
- Lindgren, M., & Packendorff, J. (2006). Entrepreneurship as boundary work: deviating from and belonging to community. In *Entrepreneurship as social change*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Lindseth, A. and Norberg, A. (2022), "Elucidating the meaning of life world phenomena: A phenomenological hermeneutical method for studying lived experience", *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 883–890. <https://doi.org/10.1111/SCS.13039>
- Lo Bosco, M. C. (2021). Autism 'super mums': Affectivity as a political capital in special mothering and autism advocacy. *Medicine Anthropology Theory*, 8(1), 1-25.
- Luhmann, M., Orth, U., Specht, J., Kandler, C. and Lucas, R.E. (2014), "Studying changes in life circumstances and personality: It's about time", *European Journal of Personality*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 256–266. <https://doi.org/10.1002/PER.1951/FORMAT/EPUB>
- Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child development*, 71(3), 543-562. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0954579400004156>
- Löbler, H., Löbler, H. and Löbler, L. (2006), "Learning entrepreneurship from a constructivist perspective", *Technology Analysis and Strategic Management*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537320500520460>
- Mackenzie, C., & Stoljar, N. (Eds.). (2000). *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self*. Oxford University Press.
- Malacrida, C. (2009). Performing motherhood in a disablist world: dilemmas of motherhood, femininity and disability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(1), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390802581927>
- Malka, Menny, Offer E Edelman, Ephrat Huss, and Rivka Hillel Lavian. 2024. "Boosting Resilience: Photovoice as a Tool for Promoting Well-Being, Social Cohesion, and Empowerment Among the Older Adult During the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Study Journal of Applied Gerontology* 43 (9): 1183–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648241234488>.
- Manoharan, G., Ashtikar, S. P., & Kumar, S. (2025). Leveraging the impact of work-life balance among women entrepreneurs. In *Examining Barriers and Building Resiliency for Rural Women Entrepreneurs* (pp. 221-238). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Margalit, M., & Raskind, M. H. (2009). Mothers of children with LD and ADHD: Empowerment through online communication. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 24(1), 39-49.
- Marlow, S. (2020). Gender and entrepreneurship: past achievements and future possibilities. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 12(1), 39-52.
- Marquis, S., Hayes, M. V., & McGrail, K. (2019). Factors affecting the health of caregivers of children who have an intellectual/developmental disability. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 16(3), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12283>
- Martire, L. M., Stephens, M. A. P., & Townsend, A. L. (2000). Centrality of women's multiple roles: beneficial and detrimental consequences for psychological well-being. *Psychology and aging*, 15(1), 148.
- Martinez, K. L. (2017). Shaping of maternal identity through parenting experiences of a child with a disability. Rowan University <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/2416>
- Masten, A. S. (2018). Resilience theory and study on children and families: Past, present, and promise. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10(1), 12-31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255>
- Mayes, R., Williams, P., & McDonald, P. (2020). Mums with cameras: Technological change, entrepreneurship and motherhood. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(6), 1468-1484.
- McCann, D., Bull, R., & Winzenberg, T. (2012). The daily patterns of time use for parents of children with complex needs. *Journal of Child Health Care*, 16(1), 26–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367493511420186>
- Mehta, P. G., & Parikh, R. (2022). Dealing with the psychological well-being of mompreneurs in millennial India. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 12825–12836. <https://doi.org/10.53730/IJHS.V6NS1.8592>
- Melville, A., & Hincks, D. (2016). Conducting sensitive interviews: A review of reflections. *Law and Method*, 1(1), 1-26.

- Mundakir, M., Choliq, I., Sukadiono, S., Fitriyani, V. R., & Firman, F. (2024). Caregiving experiences among parents of children with physical and intellectual disabilities: A qualitative systematic review. *Jurnal Ners*, 19(3), 378–395. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jn.v19i3.55282>
- Mundakir, M., Choliq, I., Sukadiono, S., Ramadhana Fitriyani, V., & Firman, F. (2025). Parenting self-efficacy mediates relationship between caregiving burden and parenting stress among parents of adolescents with disabilities. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20473/jn.v20i2.68276>
- Murnieks, C. Y., McMullen, J. S., & Cardon, M. S. (2019). Does congruence with an entrepreneur social identity encourage positive emotion under environmental dynamism? *Journal of Small Business Management*, 57(3), 872–890. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12335>
- Musyarpah, U., Kusuma, N. A., Putri, A. I., & Haibar, R. A. L. (2023). Parenting styles of mothers in shaping independence of children with special needs. *Journal of Islamic Communication and Counseling*, 2(1), 1-15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18196/jicc.v2i1.34>
- Munsell, S. E., & O'Malley, L. (2019). The lived experiences of mothers of children with disabilities. *The New Educator*, 15(4), 269-280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688X.2019.1601315>
- Neergaard, H., Shaw, E., & Carter, S. (2005). The impact of gender, social capital and networks on business ownership: a study agenda. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Study*, 11(5), 338-357. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.utu.fi:2443/10.1108/13552550510614999>
- Nichols, T. R., Lee, A., Gringle, M. R., & Welborn, A. (2022). Guilt, shame, and getting passed the blame: resisting Stigma Through the Good Mothering Ideal. In *Drugs, Identity and Stigma* (pp. 51-75). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Nienaber, B., & Kriszan, A. (2024). Studying Playfully? Assessing the Applicability of LEGO® Serious Play® for Studying Vulnerable Groups. *Societies*, 14(2), 15. DOI: 10.3390/soc14020015
- Nikolaou, D. (2012). Happy mothers, successful children: effects of maternal life satisfaction on child outcomes. Job market paper.
- Nizza, I. E., Farr, J., & Smith, J. A. (2021). Achieving excellence in interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): Four markers of high quality. *Qualitative study in psychology*, 18(3), 369-386. DOI: 10.1080/14780887.2020.1854404
- Olshansky, S. (1962). Chronic sorrow: A response to having a mentally defective child. *Social Casework*, 43(4), 190-193.
- O'Brien, W., Lloyd, K., & Ringuet-Riot, C. (2014). Mothers governing family health: From an 'ethic of care' to a 'burden of care'. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 47, pp. 317-325). Pergamon. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.11.001>
- O'reilly, A. (2010). Outlaw (ing) motherhood: a theory and politic of maternal empowerment for the twenty-first century [Paper in: Focus on Mothering.]. *Hecate*, 36(1/2), 17-29.
- O'Riordan, J., Daly, F., Loughnane, C., Kelleher, C., & Edwards, C. (2023). CareVisions: Enacting the Feminist Ethics of Care in Empirical Study. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 17(2), 109–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2023.2173794>
- Østerud, K. L., Skjøsberg, E. E., & Früh, E. A. (2024). “My child is my job now”–Care, work and careers of mothers with disabled children in the Norwegian welfare state. *Social Science & Medicine*, 355, 117097. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117097>
- Owens-Schill, A., Peticca-Harris, A., Elias, S. R., & deGama, N. (2025). I am because I have to be: Exploring one mother-worker's identity of the surrendered self through stories of mothering neurodiverse children. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 32(1), 161-180.
- Pacis, C.M. (2023), “Transformed by Parenting Experience: Perspectives, Challenges, and Optimism of Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Their Adulthood”, *Eximia*, Vol. 9, pp. 76–146.
- Palacio, Carolina, Alicia Krikorian, María José Jos´, José G´omez-Romero, and Joaquín T Limonero. (2019) “Resilience in Caregivers: A Systematic Review.” <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049909119893977>.
- Parsons, C. (2010). Constructivism and interpretive theory. *Theory and methods in political science*, 3, 80-98.

- Parchomiuk, M. (2021). GENDER BELIEFS AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AS PREDICTORS OF CONFLICT AND ENRICHMENT IN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. *57*(2), 1-19. doi:<https://doi.org/10.31299/hrri.57.2.1>
- Patti, C. J., & Ellis, C. (2017). Co-constructed interview. *The international encyclopedia of communication study methods*, 1-2. DOI: 10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0026
- Patrick-Ott, A., & Ladd, L. D. (2010). The blending of Boss's concept of ambiguous loss and Olshansky's concept of chronic sorrow: A case study of a family with a child who has significant disabilities. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, *5*(1), 73-86.
- Pearson, A. (2024). Who cares about the carers? A call to action on behalf of mothers of disabled children. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *8*, 1304676.
- Peck, B., & Mummery, J. (2018). Hermeneutic constructivism: An ontology for qualitative study. *Qualitative health study*, *28*(3), 389–407.
- Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L., & Hugman, R. (2010). Stop stealing our stories: The ethics of study with vulnerable groups. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, *2*(2), 229–251. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huq004>
- Porterfield, S. L. (2002). Work choices of mothers in families with children with disabilities. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*(4), 972–981. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2002.00972.x>
- Radu-Lefebvre, Miruna, Vincent Lefebvre, Eliana Crosina, and Ulla Hytti. 2021. "Entrepreneurial Identity: A Review and Study Agenda" *45* (6): 1550–90. DOI: 10.1177/10422587211013795
- Roos, J., & Victor, B. (2018). How it all began: The origins of LEGO® Serious Play®. *International Journal of Management and Applied Study*, *5*(4), 326–343. <https://doi.org/10.18646/2056.54.18-024>
- Rouse, J., Treanor, L., & Fleck, E. (2013). The gendering of entrepreneurship in the UK: A comparative analysis of policy and practice. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, *25*(7–8), 523–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2013.814718>
- Quinn, T., Trinh, S.-H., & Passmore, J. (2022). An exploration into using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) within a positive psychology framework in individual coaching: An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). *Study and Practice in Coaching and Leadership*, *15*(1), 102–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17521882.2021.1898427>
- Raap, E., Weille, K. L., & Dedding, C. (2024). "I am the mother of the kind of child you dread having": Experiences of living with chronic sorrow among parents with a disabled child. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 13591053241292822.
- Reid, C. E., Moss, S., & Hyman, G. (2005). Caregiver reciprocity: The effect of reciprocity, carer self-esteem and motivation on the experience of caregiver burden. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *57*(3), 186-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08276331.2013.771854>
- Rios, K., Aleman-Tovar, J., & Burke, M. (2021). Exploring patterns of advocacy and well-being of parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, *59*(6), 459–471. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-59.6.459>
- Rojas, M. (2024). Intra-household Arrangements and Well-Being. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Study* (pp. 3644-3647). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Roth, S., & Faldet, A. C. (2020). Being a mother of children with special needs during educational transitions: positioning when 'fighting against a superpower'. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *35*(4), 559-566.
- Ryan, S., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2008). Repositioning mothers: Mothers, disabled children and disability studies. *Disability & Society*, *23*(3), 199-210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590801953937>
- Saidin, K. (2016). Insider researchers: Challenges & opportunities. *Proceedings of the ICECRS*, *1*(1), v1i1-563. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21070/picecrs.v1i1.563>
- Saleem, V., Sarfraz, N., Ramzan, M., Naeem, S., Malik, S., & Khan, M. A. (2024). The Relationship between caregiver burden, perceived social support, Loneliness and Psychological Distress among mothers of Children with Intellectual Disability. *Remittances Review*, *9*(1), 1629-1643.

- Salehian, M. H. (2022). The predictive role of psychological toughness and adaptability on the actual well-being of mothers with handicapped children. *African Health Sciences*, 22(1), 611-8.
- Sarvimäki, A. (2006). Well-being as being well a Heideggerian look at well-being. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 1, 4-10. <http://www.ijqhw.net/index.php/qhw/article/viewFile/4903/5171>
- Scavarda, A. (2024). The shame–blame complex of parents with cognitively disabled children in Italy. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 46(5), 966-983.
- Scherer, N., Verhey, I., & Kuper, H. (2019). Depression and anxiety in parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLOS ONE*, 14(7), Article e0219888. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219888>
- Schmidt, E. M., Décieux, F., Zartler, U., & Schnor, C. (2023). What makes a good mother? Two decades of study reflecting social norms of motherhood. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 15(1), 57-77. DOI: 10.1111/jftr.12488
- Scorgie, K., & Sobsey, D. (2000). Transformational outcomes associated with parenting children who have disabilities. *Mental retardation*, 38(3), 195-206. [https://doi.org/10.1352/0047-6765\(2000\)038<0195:TOAWPC>2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1352/0047-6765(2000)038<0195:TOAWPC>2.0.CO;2)
- Scott, E. K. (2010). “I Feel as if I Am the One Who Is Disabled” The Emotional Impact of Changed Employment Trajectories of Mothers Caring for Children with Disabilities. *Gender & Society*, 24(5), 672-696.
- Scott, E. K. (2018). Mother-ready jobs: Employment that works for mothers of children with disabilities. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(9), 2659–2684. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18756927>
- Sedova, E., Tokmakova, E., Goryacheva, T., & Gardanova, Z. (2022). The sense of guilt of the mothers of children with special needs. *European Psychiatry*, 65(S1), S234-S235.
- Seltzer, M. M., Greenberg, J. S., Orsmond, G. I., & Lounds, J. (2005). Life course studies of siblings of individuals with developmental disabilities. *Mental Retardation*, 43(5), 354-359.
- Sen, E., & Yurtsever, S. (2007). Difficulties experienced by families with disabled children. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 12(4), 238-252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6155.2007.00119.x>
- Sevgi, G., & Ayran, G. (2024). Investigating the caregiving burden and stress of mothers with children with special needs. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 77, e538-e545.
- Shearn, J., & Todd, S. (2000). Maternal employment and family responsibilities: The perspectives of mothers of children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Study in Intellectual Disabilities*, 13(3), 109–131. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1468-3148.2000.00021.x>DeepDyve+3
- Shepherd, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2015). The “heart” of entrepreneurship: The impact of entrepreneurial action on health and well-being. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30(4), 722–741. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2015.01.003>
- Shir, N., Nikolaev, B. N., & Wincent, J. (2019). Entrepreneurship and well-being: The role of psychological autonomy, competence, and relatedness. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(5), 105875.
- Shir, N., & Ryff, C. D. (2022). Entrepreneurship, self-organization, and eudaimonic well-being: A dynamic approach. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 46(6), 1658-1684. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10422587211013798>
- Shir, N., Wiklund, J., & Manchiraju, S. (2025). Satisfaction with life as an entrepreneur: From early volition to eudaimonia. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 199(4), 777-798.
- Sim, S. S., Bourke-Taylor, H., Fossey, E., & Yu, M. L. (2021). Being more than a mother: A qualitative study of Asian immigrant mothers in Australia who have children with disabilities. *Study in Developmental Disabilities*, 117, 104060.
- Skinner, D., Bailey Jr, D. B., Correa, V., & Rodriguez, P. (1999). Narrating self and disability: Latino mothers' construction of identities vis-à-vis their child with special needs. *Exceptional children*, 65(4), 481-495.

- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and study*. SAGE.
- Smith-Young, J., Chafe, R., Audas, R., & Gustafson, D. L. (2022). "I know how to advocate": Parents' experiences in advocating for children and youth diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. *Health services insights*, 15, 11786329221078803. <https://doi.org/10.1177/11786329221078803>
- Solomon, M., Pistrang, N., & Barker, C. (2001). The benefits of mutual support groups for parents of children with disabilities. *American journal of community psychology*, 29(1), 113-132.
- Sousa, A. C. (2011). From refrigerator mothers to warrior-heroes: The cultural identity transformation of mothers raising children with intellectual disabilities. *Symbolic interaction*, 34(2), 220-243. <https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2011.34.2.220>
- Souza, D. M. D., Santana, J. V. D. J., Coelho, L. C. P., Cruz, S. D. S., Ferrer, A. P. S., Oliveira, J. L. D., & Rossato, L. M. (2025). "The caregiver's life is the uncared-for life": experiences of mothers of children with cerebral palsy in mental health care in Brazil. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, jsaf044.
- Southwick, S. M., Bonanno, G. A., Masten, A. S., Panter-Brick, C., & Yehuda, R. (2014). Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: interdisciplinary perspectives. *European journal of psychotraumatology*, 5(1), 25338. DOI: 10.3402/ejpt.v5.25338
- Souza, D. M. D., Santana, J. V. D. J., Coelho, L. C. P., Cruz, S. D. S., Ferrer, A. P. S., Oliveira, J. L. D., & Rossato, L. M. (2025). "The caregiver's life is the uncared-for life": experiences of mothers of children with cerebral palsy in mental health care in Brazil. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, jsaf044. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsaf044>
- Spitzer, Denise, Anne Neufeld, Margaret Harrison, Karen Hughes, and Miriam Stewart. 2003. "Caregiving in Transnational Context: 'My Wings Have Been Cut; Where Can I Fly?'" *Gender and Society* 17 (2): 267–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243202250832>.
- Stabile, M., & Allin, S. (2012). The economic costs of childhood disability. *The future of children*, 65-96. DOI:10.1007/s10834-007-9059-6
- Stephan, U. (2018). Entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being: A review and study agenda. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 32(3), 290–322. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0001>
- Stewart, L. M., Sellmaier, C., Brannan, A. M., & Brennan, E. M. (2023). Employed parents of children with typical and exceptional care responsibilities: Family demands and workplace supports. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 32(4), 1048–1064. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02363-5>
- Strack, R. W., Orsini, M. M., & Ewald, D. R. (2022). Revisiting the roots and aims of photovoice. *Health promotion practice*, 23(2), 221-229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399211061>
- Sutton-Brown, Camille A. 2014a. "Photography and Culture Photovoice: A Methodological Guide." *Photovoice: A Methodological Guide*, *Photography and Culture* 7 (2): 169–85. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175145214X13999922103165>.
- Szlamka, Z., Tekola, B., Hoekstra, R., & Hanlon, C. (2022). The role of advocacy and empowerment in shaping service development for families raising children with developmental disabilities. *Health Expectations*, 25(4), 1882-1891. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.13539>
- Taanila, A., Syrjälä, L., Kokkonen, J., & Järvelin, M.-R. (2002). Coping of parents with physically and/or intellectually disabled children. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 28(1), 73–86. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2214.2002.00244.x>
- Tabatabai, H. (2019). The experience of motherhood and caregiving in entrepreneurial contexts. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 12(1), 45-67.
- Tanlaka, E. F., & Aryal, S. (2025). Interpretivist constructivism: A valuable approach for qualitative nursing study. *Open Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 13(1), 8-19.10.4236/ojtr.2025.131002
- Tierney, S., Mahtani, K. R., Wong, G., Todd, J., Roberts, N., Akinyemi, O., ... & Turk, A. (2022). The role of volunteering in supporting well-being—What might this mean for social prescribing? A best-fit framework synthesis of qualitative study. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(2), e325-e346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13516>

- Tong, R. (1999). Just Caring about Maternal-fetal Relations: The Case of Cocaine-using Pregnant Women. *Embodying Bioethics. Recent Feminist Advances*, 33-43.
- Tong, Y., Li, J. X., & Shu, B. (2021). Is children's academic performance valuable to parents? Linking children's effort vs. results and fathers' vs. mothers' subjective well-being. *Child Indicators Study*, 14, 583-605.
- Tumanyan, M., & Huuki, T. (2020). Arts in working with youth on sensitive topics: A qualitative systematic review. *International Journal of education through art*, 16(3), 381-397. https://doi.org/10.1386/eta_00040_1
- Unluer, S. (2012). Being an insider researcher while conducting case study study. *Qualitative Report*, 17, 58. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/unluer.pd>
- Uy, M. A., Foo, M.-D., & Song, Z. (2013). Joint effects of prior start-up experience and coping strategies on entrepreneurs' psychological well-being. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 28(5), 583–597. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2012.04.003>
- Van Breda, A. D. (2018). A critical review of resilience theory and its relevance for social work. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 54(1), 1-18.
- van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological study and writing*. Routledge. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/54-1-611>
- Van Manen, M. (2017). "Phenomenology in its original sense", *Qualitative Health Study*, Vol. 27 No. 6, pp. 810–825. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317699381/FORMAT/EPUB>
- Van Orne, J. A., Clutter, P., Fredland, N., & Schultz, R. (2024). Caring for the child with a tracheostomy through the eyes of their caregiver: A photovoice study. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 79, 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2024.08.024>
- Vershinina, N., Phillips, N., & McAdam, M. (2022). Online communities and entrepreneuring mothers: Practices of building, being and belonging. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 34(7-8), 742-764.
- Vrankić Pavon, M., Wagner Jakab, A., & Löw, A. (2024). Exploring relationship satisfaction in mothers of children with disabilities: the predictive role of interparental conflicts and moderating role of dyadic coping. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 14, 1307827.
- Vusio, F., Thompson, A., and Birchwood, M. (2021), "A novel application of the Lego® Serious Play® methodology in mental health study: Understanding service users' experiences of the 0-19 mental health model in the United Kingdom", *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.13223>
- Wang, C. C., & Burris, M. A. (1994). Empowerment through photo novella: Portraits of participation. *Health Education Quarterly*, 21(2), 171–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819402100204>
- Wang, C. C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24(3), 369–387.
- Welter, F. (2020). Contexts and gender-looking back and thinking forward. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 12(1), 27-38.
- Wengel, Y. (2019). LEGO® Serious Play® in multi-method tourism study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(4), 1605–1623. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2019-0358>
- White, R. G., Fay, R., Chiumento, A., Giurgi-Oncu, C., & Phipps, A. (2022). Communication about distress and well-being: Epistemic and ethical considerations. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 59(4), 413–424. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615221082795>
- Wiklund, J., Nikolaev, B., Shir, N., Foo, M. Der, and Bradley, S. (2019), "Entrepreneurship and well-being: Past, present, and future", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 579–588. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSVENT.2019.01.002>
- William, F. K. A. (2024). Interpretivism or constructivism: Navigating study paradigms in social science study. *Interpretivism or Constructivism: Navigating Study Paradigms in Social Science Study*, 143(1), 5-5. DOI: 1001431220246122

- Williams, K. J., & Murray, D. W. (2015). Negotiating the normative: The other normal for mothers of disabled children. *Journal of Family Studies*, 21(3), 324-340.
- Williamson, T., Wagstaff, D. L., Goodwin, J., & Smith, N. (2023). Mothering ideology: A qualitative exploration of mothers' perceptions of navigating motherhood pressures and partner relationships. *Sex roles*, 88(1), 101-117. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-022-01345-7>
- Windle, G. (2010). What is resilience? A review and concept analysis. *Reviews in Clinical Gerontology*, 21(2), 152-169. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959259810000420>
- Wrigley, J. (1997). The cultural contradictions of motherhood. *Contemporary Sociology*, 26(4), 484. DOI:10.2307/2655113
- Xie, X., & Wu, Y. (2022). Doing well and doing good: How responsible entrepreneurship shapes female entrepreneurial success. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 178(3), 803-828. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04799-z>
- Yip, C. C. H., & Chan, K. K. S. (2022). Longitudinal impact of public stigma and courtesy stigma on parents of children with autism spectrum disorder: The moderating role of trait mindfulness. *Study in Developmental Disabilities*, 127, 104243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2022.104243>
- Young, N. A. (2022). Childhood disability in the United States: 2019. ACSBR-006.
- Zablotsky, B., Ng, A. E., Black, L. I., & Blumberg, S. J. (2023). Diagnosed developmental disabilities in children aged 3-17 years: United States, 2019-2021.
- Zaitouni, M., Hewapathirana, G., Mostafa, M., Al Hajj, R., & ElMelegy, A. R. (2024). Work-life balance: A landscape mapping of two decades of scholarly study. *Heliyon*, 10(14). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e34084>

Appendices

Appendix 1. The following are the instructions sent to the participants participating in the photovoice study (Article IV)

Photovoice Instructions

For the next step on our journey together, we are going to get creative 😊 You have 4 weeks, with deadline of MONDAY 17th of APRIL to take least five photos in response to each question, below for a total of 20 photos.

I kindly ask you to take photos that represented ideas behind or answers to the items, not photos of your child or children directly.

Please send the photos to me however you like, as often as you like as individual photos or as a group of photos, however you feel is right.

The easiest way to send these might be through WhatsApp or email:

+358 45 255 7373 racaos@utu.fi

The deadline in this case is quite crucial to adhere to, as I will need to print out the photos and do some general analysis for our next meeting which will take place between 1-5 of May 😊

If you have any questions, please as always send me a message – and have fun!

- (1) As a parent of a child with a disability, what unique challenges do you face?
- (2) As a parent of a child with a disability, what are the greatest joys you experience?
- (3) As a parent of a child with a disability, what does your typical day look like?
- (4) As a parent of a child with a disability, what do you wish society knew about your child?

Appendix 2. The following was sent to all participants to obtain Consent to Participate in the Study Study.

Well-being of mompreneurs with special needs children

I, the undersigned hereby declare the following about my participation in the Study Study ‘Well-being of mompreneurs with special needs children, conducted by Regina Casteleijn-Osorno, M.Sc from the department of Management and Entrepreneurship at the University of Turku, Finland to satisfy the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Science (Economics and Business Administration).

1. I have read and understood the Information Sheet (as well as the Privacy Notice included) that was given to me and I have sufficient information about the process of the study. YES / NO
2. I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that I have the right to discontinue my participation at any stage. YES / NO
3. I understand that the study data is gathered only for the purpose of scientific study in the public interest and I understand my rights regarding my personal data, as explained in the Privacy Notice. YES / NO
4. I acknowledge that I have received the information necessary to make an informed decision about my participation in the study, my questions have been answered, and I agree to volunteer as a study subject. YES / NO
5. I have been allowed enough time to consider my decision to participate, and I agree to take part in the Study Study. YES / NO
6. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous. YES / NO
7. I understand that my participation in the interview will be audio-recorded. YES / NO
8. I understand that my input may be quoted but I will not be identified. YES / NO
9. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased. YES / NO
10. I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study. YES / NO

Date, Name & Signature* of the study participant with his/her contact information

Date, Name & Signature* of the researcher in charge (Regina Casteleijn-Osorno)

November 23, 2022, Espoo, Finland, Liverpool, United Kingdom, Regina Casteleijn-Osorno

Appendix 3. Expanded Privacy Notice.

(The model includes the information required under the Articles 13 and 14 of the EU GDPR):

1. Name of the study:

The well-being of mompreneurs while caring for special needs children

2. Data Controller:

Regina Casteleijn-Osorno, University of Turku, racaos@utu.fi

3. Contact information of the responsible person:

Regina Casteleijn-Osorno, University of Turku, racaos@utu.fi, + 358 45 255 7373

4. Purpose and legal basis for the processing of personal data:

The study collects mothers' views and experiences on being an entrepreneur while raising a special needs child, conducted with interviews and personal diaries, blogs, vlogs. Email addresses are used when sending out invitations to interviews and when communicating about the personal diaries. The interviews involve collecting information on the mothers' experiences and views on e.g. entrepreneurship, mothering a special needs child, well-being, stigma, identity, health, family, work-family balance, and relationships with the community and others.

5. The legal basis for processing personal data in the Article 6 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation is:

- Processing is necessary for scientific study (public interest, Point 1a of the Article 6)
- Data subject has given their consent to processing personal data (consent, Point 1e of the Article 6)

6. Processed personal data:

The following information of the data subjects is stored in the register and destroyed upon completion of the study:

Names, gender, birthdate, marital status, sexuality

7. Recipients and recipient groups of personal data:

The data will not be transferred or disclosed to parties outside the study group which includes 2 supervisors.

8. Information on transferring data to third countries:

Personal data will not be disclosed to parties outside the EU or the European Economic Area.

9. Retention period of personal data or criteria for its determination:

The recorded interviews will be transcribed into text files and the recordings will be destroyed. Simultaneously, the study data will be anonymised by erasing identifiable personal data. Study data is stored until thesis submission, defense and publication, after which the data is disposed of securely.

10. Rights of the data subject:

The data subject has the right to access their personal data retained by the researcher. The right to rectification or erasure of data, and the right to restrict or object the processing of data. The right to erasure is not applied in scientific or historic study purposes in so far as the right to erasure is likely to render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of the objectives of that processing.

11. Information on the source of personal data:

In order to send the invitations to the interview, email addresses or the possibility of forwarding a message are requested from the universities. The other data is collected directly from those who participate in the interviews for the study.

12. Information on the existence of automatic decision-making, including profiling:

The data will not be used for automatic decision-making or profiling.

1. Name of the register: A study involving interviews which collects mothers' views and experiences about their life, well-being, work life balance, entrepreneurship. 'Mother's experience as entrepreneurs and well-being'

2. Data Controller: Researcher, Regina Casteleijn-Osorno

3. Contact information of the responsible person: racaos@utu.fi, +358 45 255 7373

4. Purposes for processing personal data: Data is used in the study study concerning the well-being of mompreneurs and the influence entrepreneurship has on well-being.

6. Processed personal data: The data collected is the (first) name of the mothers', contents of the interview concisely (e.g. mothers' views and experiences on motherhood, special needs parenting, well-being, and influence of entrepreneurship on well-being of individuals, family and community).

7. Recipients or recipient groups of personal data: Researcher, Regina Casteleijn-Osorno, Supervisors Ulla Hytti and Seppo Poutanen

8. Transferring data to third countries: Personal data will not be disclosed to parties outside the EU or the European Economic Area.

9. Retention period of personal data: Data will be stored until completion of the doctoral studies, estimated graduation, December 2025. Should the studies be completed earlier, the data will be destroyed on that date. Accordingly, anonymized data may be used after completion of the study. If that is the case, the participants will be notified.

10. Rights of the data subject: Processing of personal data is necessary to conduct scientific study.

11. Information on the source of personal data: The data is collected directly from those who participate in the interviews for the study.

12. Right to withdraw from the study at any point. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the process without any repercussions.



**TURUN
YLIOPISTO**
UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU

ISBN 978-952-02-0572-0 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-952-02-0573-7 (PDF)
ISSN 2343-3159 (Painettu/Print)
ISSN 2343-3167 (Verkkajulkaisu/Online)