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**ELDER CARE, SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN AND WORK-FAMILY  
BALANCE**

**An exploration using work-family border theory**

***A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Despite work-life balance being an area of interest to many researchers, there is little reference to any effects related specifically to elder care. Current demographics indicate that the proportion of elderly in the community is increasing, and with greater workforce participation (particularly among women workers) the availability of family caregivers is less guaranteed. Women are more likely to be responsible for elder care, and as they seek to manage their work and life, are also more likely to seek workplace flexibility, sometimes through self-employment.

The effect that elder care may be having on the work-life balance of self-employed women is the focus of this research project. Using work-family border theory as a lens, this research documented the effect that elder care had on the lives of a group of self-employed women who also had elder care responsibilities. Eight women from the Wellington region participated in this research, which was carried out from a broadly phenomenological perspective. Each participant shared information, using a case study approach, about their business and elder care responsibilities. The results of this research indicate the profound effect of emotions in the elder care situation, and also the effect of expectations from others whose influences affected the ability of the participants to achieve work-life balance.

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