
**NAVIGATING NEURODIVERSITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CHALLENGES
OF ENTREPRENEURS WITH ADHD**

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Preface

Entrepreneurship involves opportunity recognition, taking risks, and having an innovative mindset to achieve success (Diandra & Azmy, 2020; Lerner et al., 2018; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). ADHD, characterized by unique neurological patterns, presents both challenges and opportunities in this field. During ‘Onbeperkt Ondernemen’ (Entrepreneurship Unlimited), a research program from RSM & ECE, I realized that Entrepreneurs with ADHD face specific challenges that can hinder their ability to leverage their strengths fully. When trying to offer solutions, I realized that these challenges need to be comprehensively understood to provide effective support. Existing literature falls short of identifying the specific problems of Entrepreneurs with ADHD and, consequently, the possibility of offering tailored solutions for thriving in Entrepreneurship for individuals with ADHD. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap by mapping out ADHD-specific entrepreneurial challenges through qualitative research. The findings will hopefully serve as a valuable resource for educators, mentors, and individuals with ADHD, offering insights into common challenges and giving potential solutions in the epilogue.

I am thankful to everyone who contributed to this thesis in any way. Specifically, I would like to thank my interview respondents for valuable insights into their unique brains and my thesis coaches for their critical yet flexible mindset. Additionally, I want to give a special thank you to my close friends for helping me organize my chaotic thoughts. It all seemed logical to me, but your support and clarity helped me make sense of it. I hope I have created a comprehensive piece of work. If you would like to discuss this research further, please come and talk to me. I can explain it much better in person than any paper I write ever could.

Executive Summary

Individuals with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) tend to experience difficulties such as a short attention span and a lack of persistence in routine tasks, which can make it challenging for them to fit into traditional employment settings (Lerner et al., 2019). Hyperactivity and impulsivity, traits commonly associated with ADHD, are linked to higher entrepreneurial intentions and self-employment rates (Dimic & Orlov, 2014; Lerner et al., 2019; Rajah et al., 2021; Stappers & Andries, 2022; Verheul et al., 2015, 2016; Wiklund et al., 2017). Consequently, individuals with ADHD are more likely to initiate new businesses (Lerner et al., 2019). Nevertheless, their ADHD can negatively impact their Entrepreneurial Performance, Income, and Persistence (Greidanus & Liao, 2021; Rajah et al., 2021).

The ADHD symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity can translate into proactivity and the tendency for risk-taking and innovation, theoretically enhancing certain entrepreneurial skills (Hatak et al., 2021) and making individuals with ADHD more prone to entrepreneurial success (Shirokova et al., 2022; Wiklund et al., 2016; Wismans, Thurik, et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). However, practical challenges remain in optimizing these advantages and minimizing the negative effects of ADHD symptoms (Greidanus & Liao, 2021). The first step in supporting these entrepreneurs is to conduct research to identify and understand their specific challenges in entrepreneurship. What are the (unique) challenges they experience? Specifically, what challenges prevent them from leveraging their strengths?

Understanding these challenges is important not only for the entrepreneurs themselves but also for their teams, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. The literature review revealed a gap in understanding why Entrepreneurs with ADHD are not necessarily more successful despite their entrepreneurial tendencies. This research aims to fill that gap by addressing the research question: What are the challenges that Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience? By providing valuable insights into these practical challenges, this study can serve as a foundation for developing effective support strategies.

This study utilized an exploratory qualitative approach to understand the unique challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD. The primary data collection methods were semi-structured interview questions and a short in-interview questionnaire. The data were analyzed using GIOIA analysis, which is well-suited for capturing and interpreting complex qualitative data by systematically organizing the data and identifying key patterns and insights (Gioia et al., 2013). This analysis revealed several significant findings regarding the challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD:

Communication: Entrepreneurs with ADHD often struggle with effective communication, especially in writing. Possible causes for this include hyperactivity in the brain, forgetfulness, and high levels of energy, passion, or enthusiasm. Participants noted that their thought processes differ from those of neurotypical individuals, often skipping steps (e.g., jumping from A to E), which can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in accurately conveying ideas to team members and stakeholders.

Executive Functioning: Managing daily tasks effectively is a common challenge due to tendencies toward distraction, fluctuating passion, and forgetfulness. These issues often lead to irregular motivation and productivity, making it difficult to follow through on planned activities.

Self-Perception: Entrepreneurs with ADHD often struggle to accept their condition and explain their experiences to neurotypical individuals. They tend to fight against their differences and perceive tasks as more challenging compared to others, contributing to a general lack of confidence. This lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy, fueled by past experiences of not fitting in and thinking differently, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome. As a result, ADHD entrepreneurs may find it harder to confidently manage their businesses, assert their capabilities, and set their prices.

Effectively Balancing ADHD Strengths: While Entrepreneurs with ADHD possess specific strengths such as a positive mindset, the ability to think about multiple things simultaneously (meta overview), effective problem-solving, and high passion, these strengths can also become challenges if not managed well. For instance, a positive mindset can lead to internalizing negativity, meta overview can result in communication problems and distraction, problem-solving can turn into solving unwanted problems or giving unsolicited advice, and high passion can lead to tunnel vision.

In conclusion, Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience a range of challenges that differ from those faced by their neurotypical counterparts. These challenges span personal management, professional management, and communication. Understanding these challenges can contribute to further research on neurodiverse entrepreneurship and innovative educational methods. It also provides a foundation for future studies to explore additional factors influencing the success of ADHD entrepreneurs, such as the role of specific interventions, the impact of different business environments, and ADHD-informed entrepreneurial education programs.

Hence, additional research is necessary to create strategies and comprehensive educational programs tailored to the specific experiences of Entrepreneurs with ADHD to address their difficulties. This research and education should prioritize pressing issues such as productivity, communication, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Key words: ADHD, Entrepreneurship, Challenges, Strengths, Communication, Executive Functioning, Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy, Education, Innovation.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	II
<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>III</i>
<i>1 Introduction.....</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Contribution & Relevance	2
1.3 Objective & Research Question.....	3
<i>2 Literature Review</i>	<i>3</i>
2.1 ADHD & Entrepreneurship.....	3
ADHD as a diagnosis.....	3
Literature on ADHD & Entrepreneurship.....	4
2.2 Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurial Challenges	5
Definition of Entrepreneurship	5
Aspects of Entrepreneurship	6
Potential Entrepreneurial Challenges.....	6
<i>3 Methodology.....</i>	<i>9</i>
3.1 Research Design	9
Research Philosophy	9
Research Approach	9
Research Setting.....	10
3.2 Case Selection	11
Sampling Strategy	11
Ethical Considerations	12
3.3 Data Collection	13
Data Collection Approach.....	13
Theme development for Interview Questions	13
Interview protocol.....	14
3.4 Data Analysis.....	15
Data Analyzation Approach.....	15
Data Visualisation	15
Credibility of Research Findings.....	15
<i>4 Results.....</i>	<i>16</i>
Overview	16
4.1 Across Case Analysis	16
Entrepreneurial Challenges	16
4.2 Origins of Entrepreneurial Challenges	21
ADHD Symptoms	22
Entrepreneurial Strengths.....	25
<i>5 Discussion.....</i>	<i>28</i>
Overview	28

5.1 Key Findings	28
Summary of Challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD	28
Challenges in Professional Management	28
Challenges in Personal Management	28
5.2 Additional Findings	30
Challenge of Balancing Strengths.....	30
Challenges Arising from ADHD Symptoms	31
5.3 Theoretical Contribution	33
A Systematic Mapping of Challenges.....	33
Relation to existing literature	34
5.4 Practical Contribution	35
5.5 Limitations	36
5.6 Suggestions for future research	36
5.7 Concluding remarks	37
6 Epilogue	39
6.1 Results & Data Table	39
6.2 Discussion: Best Practices of Entrepreneurs with ADHD	41
<i>References</i>	43
<i>Appendix</i>	49
Chapter 2	49
Table 2.1	49
Table 2.2	50
Table 2.3	50
Table 2.4	51
Table 2.5	52
Table 2.6	53
Chapter 3	54
Interview Guide	54
Lijst Bedrijfsaspecten.....	58
Chapter 4	60
Post-Interview Analysis	60
CodeBook	66
Figure 4.1	73
Chapter 5	74
Table 5.5	74
Table 5.6	74
Chapter 6	76
Table 6.2	76

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

“It’s there, I feel it. I... I just don’t know how to access it. I feel like a Porsche driving on a cheap road.”

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of identifying opportunities, taking risks, and creating and managing a business to achieve success (Diandra & Azmy, 2020; Lerner et al., 2018; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). It involves the willingness to innovate, the ability to recognize and capitalize on market gaps, and, most importantly, the determination and potential to overcome the many challenges that the journey of entrepreneurship brings (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022).

Entrepreneurship is diverse in nature (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000); individuals from different industries and backgrounds can identify opportunities, create innovative solutions, and build successful businesses (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022). Opportunity recognition is salient to entrepreneurship (Lerner et al., 2018; Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022). However, in today’s landscape, the straightforward opportunities are generally taken. Hence, contemporary entrepreneurs require a brain that thinks innovatively, recognizes opportunities quickly, and dares to take a step without much premeditation.

Neurodiverse people – specifically people with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (furthermore mentioned as ADHD), have the potential to meet this demand. The literature on ADHD and entrepreneurship highlights the possibility of leveraging certain aspects of ADHD to help individuals find a good fit within the field of entrepreneurship (Wiklund et al., 2016, 2017). Research findings indicate a positive correlation between ADHD and entrepreneurial intentions (Verheul et al., 2015), orientation (Wismans, Thurik, et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021), mindset (Moore et al., 2021), as well as business start-up activities (Wiklund et al., 2017) due to their natural tendency for risk-taking and pursuing self-employment (Verheul et al., 2016). However, practical challenges remain in optimizing these advantages and minimizing the negative effects of ADHD symptoms (Greidanus & Liao, 2021). The literature review revealed a significant gap in understanding why entrepreneurs with ADHD are not necessarily more successful despite their entrepreneurial tendencies. This research aims to fill that gap by tackling the first part of this question, identifying the specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs with ADHD.

ADHD is characterized by differences in dopaminergic and norepinephrine signaling, affecting motivation, impulse control, and attention (Rubia, 2018; Weibel et al., 2020; Doyle, 2020). These neurological differences can lead to challenges in various aspects of life, including work, school, and relationships (Weibel et al., 2020). In professional environments, adults with ADHD may struggle with organization, time management, and executive functioning, while impulsivity may lead to risky behaviors (Weibel et al., 2020). Additionally, their distinct thinking patterns can present challenges in articulating thoughts or visions, particularly in writing (Kelly et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurship inherently presents a multitude of challenges, such as broader responsibilities, higher risk and uncertainty, and the need to combine knowledge-based assets (Turuk, 2021; Dijkhuizen, 2015; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This research builds on the premise that ADHD symptoms may lead to specific challenges that prevent individuals from fully leveraging the positive aspects of ADHD (Sedgwick et al., 2019). Prior to offering

solutions, it is important to identify and understand these challenges comprehensively. Given the extensive range of potential issues, attempting to address all of them simultaneously would be impractical. Therefore, this study aims to map out these challenges and focus on those that significantly impact Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE). ESE is closely linked to entrepreneurial performance (Chen et al., 1998; McGee & Peterson, 2019) through decision-making and task performance (Khedhaouria et al., 2015). By enhancing ESE or addressing the most impactful issues first, entrepreneurial performance can be improved more rapidly (Chen et al., 1998).

1.2 Contribution & Relevance

To effectively explore and describe these challenges, ten Entrepreneurs with ADHD from various (business) backgrounds (Chapter 3.2) were given the opportunity to tell their stories and delineate their problems in semi-structured interviews of 60-210 minutes. Their real-life examples of practical problems are consequently systematically analyzed following the GIOIA method and visualized in extensive Data Tables (Chapter 4.1), mapping out the challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD. In addition, this paper explores whether specific characteristics of Entrepreneurs with ADHD exacerbate or mitigate the challenges faced, providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between ADHD Symptoms, Strengths, and entrepreneurial challenges. This exploration and mapping have not yet been systematically conducted, which constitutes the primary contribution of this paper. The findings will serve as a valuable resource for educators, mentors, and individuals with ADHD, raising awareness of common pitfalls and facilitating collaborative problem-solving efforts in future research. The epilogue will include a compilation of best practices and potential solutions identified during the research.

Compiling a clear overview of the extensive challenges exacerbated by the interchange between ADHD and entrepreneurship is important and relevant in more ways than one. Although there are treatments to improve ADHD (e.g., Ritalin, Amphetamine & methylphenidate) and self-help books on how to manage (your) ADHD, the behavioral characteristics of ADHD do not fit into a simple binary classification of normal versus abnormal; instead, they exist on a spectrum or continuum (Sedgwick et al., 2019). This means that certain aspects of ADHD can be beneficial rather than impairing, or some adults may have particular strengths or attributes that help manage and mitigate their ADHD-related challenges – and even thrive in various fields of Entrepreneurship. Hence, ADHD manifests uniquely in each individual, and there is a need for a personalized (and often costly) approach to solving problems, such as mentoring or coaching. Additionally, while research on how to live with ADHD is abundant in self-help books and podcasts, it does not equate to knowing how to thrive with ADHD. Notably, brain research indicates a crucial distinction: the “what to do” aspect is located in the back of the brain, an area typically unaffected by ADHD, whereas the “getting it done” aspect is situated in the front, where ADHD brains show weaker functionality (Rubia, 2018). This dichotomy highlights a paradox within self-help literature, which often fails to offer the necessary support for managing ADHD effectively. To fuel further research, increase awareness, and hopefully make solutions more accessible, it is important to identify the specific challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD and their origins. Additionally, by compiling and clarifying these challenges, Entrepreneurs can be assisted in recognizing their own problem statements. Furthermore, by studying successful Entrepreneurs with ADHD, best practices can be identified that could enhance entrepreneurial education, podcasts, and community support platforms (Epilogue). Ultimately, this research aims to enhance their business acumen and productivity.

1.3 Objective & Research Question

The purpose of this paper is to achieve a better understanding of how entrepreneurship intersects with the strengths and challenges of ADHD. The aim is to create a comprehensive list of challenges to benefit stakeholders seeking practical solutions and ultimately find ways to empower Entrepreneurs with ADHD. This will be accomplished by addressing the following research question:

RQ: *What challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?*

2 Literature Review

The aim of this literature review is twofold: (1) to gain an understanding of all aspects of the research question, specifically ADHD, Entrepreneurship, the interplay between ADHD and Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurial Challenges, and (2) to see what research has already been done on ADHD and Entrepreneurship and on Entrepreneurial Challenges to later compare it to the found list of Challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Chapter 5.3).

The following research themes were the starting point for this literature review: ADHD, Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurial Challenges. The research areas were assessed using the research tool Google Scholar and available literature at the University Library. The search terms included ADHD, Neurodiversity in Entrepreneurship, ADHD & Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurial Challenges. Based on this literature review, the most relevant articles are discussed below and categorized under the specific research themes: ADHD & Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurial Challenges.

2.1 ADHD & Entrepreneurship

ADHD as a diagnosis

ADHD, an acronym for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, is a prevalent neuropsychiatric condition characterized by hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattentiveness, typically diagnosed in childhood (Polanczyk et al., 2007). The occurrence of persistent adult ADHD, which starts in childhood (childhood-onset), and symptomatic adult ADHD (can occur at any stage of life) both decrease with advancing age (Song et al., 2021). The prevalence of persistent adult ADHD is found to be 2.58%, while the prevalence of symptomatic adult ADHD is 6.76% (Song et al., 2021). This might be explained by ADHD being diagnosed later. Most academic papers estimate that approximately 5% of children and adolescents are affected by ADHD globally (Polanczyk et al., 2007)

Although the precise causes of ADHD remain unknown, medical studies suggest a neurobiological origin with a genetic basis (Biederman et al., 2012). ADHD affects dopaminergic signaling and norepinephrine signaling (Kollins & Adcock, 2014). In common terms: *'Your wiring is different'* (Mason & Rosier, 2024). Dopaminergic signaling is disturbed, which impacts motivation, impulse, and movement control (Arnsten, 2006). The norepinephrine signaling affects attention & focus (Arnsten, 2006). More specifically, an ADHD brain omits reduced activation in the inferior front striatal circuit compared to people without ADHD during motor inhibition tasks; this prevents motion and controlling movement (specifically reduced movement in the supplementary motor area, anterior cingulate cortex, right striatum, and left thalamus). It also affects the right dorsal attention network, relating to

inattentiveness. In more common terms, it can be described as difficult to know what to do and when to do it. Mainly because of the apparent lack of ability to engage the most effective part of the brain: the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC). The ACC plays a vital role in numerous cognitive functions, such as motivation, decision-making, learning, cost-benefit analysis, conflict monitoring, and error detection (Apps et al., 2016).

The default mode network (DMN) is on when no specific tasks are being performed (daydreaming, wakeful rest, etc.) (Duffy et al., 2021). When adults work willfully on tasks (goal orientated), the DMN deactivates, and attentional pathways engage. With ADHD, the DMN does not deactivate when the attention pathways go on (Duffy et al., 2021). Weak connections between control centers and the DMN cause an inability to modulate DMN activity (Duffy et al., 2021). With an ADHD brain, the balance between the Cognitive Control network and the DMN is either reduced or absent (Duffy et al., 2021). The lack of separation suggests why there are attentional lapses (Duffy et al., 2021). Instructing the focus control system to pay attention to the task at hand – say the room that needs to be cleaned – but the circuits that connect to the DMN fail to send the instructions to quiet down. DMN notices a new cleaning tool in your gathered stuff; emotional interest centers light up and overwhelm the weak voice of the cognitive centers.

Neuroimaging has revealed structural differences in the ADHD brain (Kollins & Adcock, 2014). Specifically, the prefrontal cortex, basal ganglia, and posterior inferior cerebellum vermis are smaller in volume, affecting focus and attention (Kollins & Adcock, 2014). This means that ADHD is not simply a matter of behavioral preference but rather a difference in how the brain is structured. What may appear as behavioral choices, such as laziness, sloppiness, and forgetfulness, are likely due to differences in brain structure (Kollins & Adcock, 2014).

The three defining traits of ADHD (Impulsivity, hyperactivity & inattention) can have both positive and negative implications in personal or professional environments. Negative implications encompass challenges in maintaining sustained, goal-directed behaviour, increased susceptibility to abuse, and difficulties in impulse control (Lerner et al., 2018). Conversely, adults with ADHD often exhibit a heightened degree of creativity compared to those without the disorder (Verheul et al., 2015). Additionally, a positive aspect of ADHD is the ability to navigate uncertainty, which is linked to the higher risk-taking propensity observed in individuals with ADHD, which in turn explains the perceived likeliness to entrepreneurial intention (Lerner et al., 2018; Verheul et al., 2015)

Literature on ADHD & Entrepreneurship

Individuals with ADHD tend to experience difficulties such as a short attention span and a lack of persistence in routine tasks, which can make it challenging for them to fit into regular jobs (Lerner et al., 2019). In 2015, research indicated that those who exhibit ADHD-like behavior are likely to have an intention to pursue an entrepreneurial career (Verheul et al., 2015). It has been observed that hyperactivity and impulsivity lead to entrepreneurial intentions and higher self-employment rate (Dimic & Orlov, 2014; Lerner et al., 2019; Rajah et al., 2021; Stappers & Andries, 2022; Verheul et al., 2015, 2016; Wiklund et al., 2017) and are more prone to entrepreneurial orientation, due to their proactive nature, tendency for risk taking & innovation (Shirokova et al., 2022; Wiklund et al., 2016; Wismans, Thurik, et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021). They are more likely to initiate new businesses (Lerner et al., 2019), but their ADHD has a negative effect on Entrepreneurial Performance, Income & Persistence (Greidanus & Liao, 2021; Rajah et al., 2021). However, different factors such as treatment, passion, hyperfocus,

partner, education, and wealth can be a positive moderating factor (Greidanus & Liao, 2021; Hatak et al., 2021; Wiklund et al., 2016). Additionally, while ADHD has a positive effect on opportunity recognition (Moore et al., 2021), it has a negative effect on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (Tucker et al., 2021).

The influence of ADHD on entrepreneurship is complex and involves multiple dimensions of impulsivity and hyperactivity (Verheul et al., 2015; Wiklund et al., 2017). The beneficial effects of ADHD symptoms on entrepreneurship are mainly seen in hyperactivity, increased sensation-seeking tendencies and lack of premeditation (Wiklund et al., 2017). Wiklund et al. (2018) indicated that ADHD-related traits such as high energy and risk tolerance can lead to entrepreneurial success under the right conditions. ADHD can also contribute positively to rapid decision-making and opportunity recognition (Lerner et al., 2018). Lerner et al. (2018) argue that ADHD-associated cognitive flexibility can foster innovative business practices. Further neurological evidence suggests a link between brain function and entrepreneurial tendencies in ADHD (Lerner et al., 2019). ADHD-related neural patterns can enhance creativity and persistence (Lerner et al., 2019). The negative effects of ADHD symptoms are mainly found in inattention (Wiklund et al., 2017). Inattention symptoms are related to less proactivity (Sônego et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurship is characterized by uncertainty, which can lead to anxiety, worry, procrastination, and inaction for most people. However, it also provides more autonomy in terms of job design and task allocation, which may be attractive to individuals who need more flexibility in designing their own tasks. Acknowledging the high uncertainty and autonomy in entrepreneurship, ADHD symptoms, associated with negative consequences in many areas of life, may have positive implications in the context of entrepreneurship (Lerner et al., 2019; Wiklund et al., 2017), where entrepreneurial passion serves as a mediator between ADHD symptoms and business success (Hatak et al., 2021).

In conclusion, ADHD might predispose individuals towards entrepreneurial activities due to unique brain functioning. However, the benefits and drawbacks of ADHD symptoms vary widely depending on business context and support structures (Lerner et al., 2018; Verheul et al., 2016). The theoretical framework in Table 2.1 (Appendix) forms the basis of our understanding of the link between ADHD and entrepreneurship.

2.2 Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurial Challenges

Definition of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been broadly studied in academic literature, particularly since the second decade of this eon. However, long before, various scholars have already attempted to give a clear definition of entrepreneurship (Table 2.2, Appendix). These scholars have shown that entrepreneurship can be defined based on various factors, including entrepreneurial skills, innovation, and management of uncertainty and opportunity discovery (Say, 1803; Schumpeter, 1934; Knight, 1973; Drucker, 1985; Hisrich, 1990)

Later, Entrepreneurship literature contributed to a broader understanding, no longer about the entrepreneur itself but rather about the interdisciplinary and connecting practice of entrepreneurship, crucial for economic success and development (Table 2.3, Appendix)

In 2020, all of these definitions were analyzed and combined by Dianda and Azmy (2020), creating an overall definition of Entrepreneurship:

"Entrepreneurship is a disciplined and creative activity that operates both independently and interdisciplinarily, involving the identification, exploitation, and management of new business opportunities. It integrates innovation and creativity to transform existing practices into novel and effective business models, thereby generating economic and social value. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in driving economic development and job creation through the strategic deployment of technical and managerial skills." (Diandra & Azmy, 2020)

Stressing that Entrepreneurship is indeed multifaceted and multidimensional, involving various aspects (innovation, management, and the ability to adapt and change) that are crucial for the successful execution of entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, it involves a significant element of creativity, being akin to an art form. It is a driver of economic development, and as capitalism works, entrepreneurs need to continuously recognize opportunities and innovate to effectively manage and grow their enterprises. Challenges within entrepreneurship include the need for continuous learning and adapting within dynamic market environments (Diandra & Azmy, 2020).

Aspects of Entrepreneurship

With this definition, it can be clearly seen that the concept of entrepreneurship comprises a diverse array of activities that are integral to its success. It extends beyond merely seeing a market gap and capitalizing on it by developing corresponding products or services. Instead, (good) entrepreneurship demands sustainable operational frameworks, proficiency not only in idea generation but also in the other aspects of business management, or at least the formation of a team with an array of complementary skills to address operational domains, as depicted in Table 2.4; *aspects of Entrepreneurship* (Appendix) effectively. A short summary of common Entrepreneurial Aspects include; Risk-Taking, Proactiveness, Opportunity Recognition, Resource Management, Networking, Adaptability, Customer Focus, Leadership, Lifelong Learning, Innovation management, Work-Life Balance, Self-Reflection, Social Responsibility and Social Impact.

Potential Entrepreneurial Challenges

Many potential challenges come along with these various business aspects (Table 2.5; *Potential Challenges of Various Aspects of Entrepreneurship*). The nature and intensity of these challenges often depend on the entrepreneurial context, which can vary significantly based on factors such as geographic location, age, social support, and gender (Welter, 2011). As mentioned, entrepreneurship is a dynamic interplay of aspects such as searching, planning, marshaling, implementing (people), implementing (finances), and innovating (Chapter 2.2). Each of these facets presents its own challenges that entrepreneurs must navigate. This research focuses on the personal challenges faced by entrepreneurs, impacting work-life balance and personal well-being, as well as the traditional and new challenges encountered when setting up a business. In the discussion (Chapter 5), the distinction between problems typical of entrepreneurs and those specific to ADHD entrepreneurs aims to highlight the challenges of neurodivergent entrepreneurs compared to those of neurotypical entrepreneurs.

Traditional Challenges (just to mention a few)

For as long as entrepreneurship exists, financing is needed to start and scale a business (Kerr & Nanda, 2011). Frictions in the capital markets have a significant impact on financing opportunities for new ventures. Small and new businesses often struggle to secure financing due to perceived risks and limited operating histories (Kerr & Nanda, 2011). Entrepreneurs must navigate investor skepticism, especially during economic downturns or market volatility (Kerr & Nanda, 2011). Limited access to capital can hinder growth and innovation, forcing

entrepreneurs to focus on short-term survival rather than long-term strategic goals (Kerr & Nanda, 2011). Alternative financing options like angel investors and crowdfunding can help overcome these challenges (Kerr & Nanda, 2011).

Additionally, Regulation is a traditional challenge for entrepreneurship, especially in complex regulatory environments such as the Netherlands. Stringent regulatory environments can create significant barriers for entrepreneurs, particularly those working in sectors that are heavily regulated, such as health, environment, and energy (Ricciardi et al., 2021). The tension between the need for regulatory frameworks to ensure safety and fairness and the need for flexibility to foster innovation is well-known and has existed for a long time (Blind, 2012). Entrepreneurs must develop adaptive and innovative strategies to cope with regulatory demands, which can involve forming alliances or innovating within the bounds of existing regulations.

'New' Challenges

Entrepreneurs need to constantly adapt their strategies and operations to keep up with a rapidly changing environment. While entrepreneurship used to be primarily about making money with a good idea, it now involves continuously recognizing opportunities, creating innovative business models, networking, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance in order to be successful (Drucker, 1985; Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022; Stephan et al., 2023). Table 2.4 (Appendix) outlines various challenges related to different aspects of entrepreneurship. In this section, some of these challenges are highlighted.

Emerging technologies are reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape (Daraojimba et al., 2023). And entrepreneurs, in turn, again need to reshape their strategies and operations to adapt and innovate. Entrepreneurs should not only adopt new technologies but also fundamentally rethink their business models to maintain USPs and competitiveness (Daraojimba et al., 2023). Technological advancements have lowered entry barriers and enabled more personalized customer interactions (Daraojimba et al., 2023). However, they also intensify competition as it's easier to copy technologies. Herein, technology is both a facilitator of innovation and a disruptor of existing industries. Entrepreneurs need to leverage technological capabilities while mitigating the risks associated with it. Within all this, there is an increasing demand for technical skills and digital literacy among entrepreneurs (Daraojimba et al., 2023). Additionally, new regulatory challenges emerge, and entrepreneurs have to take multiple facets into account, such as data privacy, cybersecurity, and ethical considerations (Blind, 2012). They need to be proactive, strategically flexible, and open to continuous learning (Rosado-Cubero et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2021).

In addition, entrepreneurs increasingly face challenges related to environmental sustainability, including resource management and energy efficiency, which are stringent for long-term business sustainability (Ricciardi et al., 2021). Social entrepreneurship is gaining importance in addressing social issues (Aljuwaiber, 2020). While environmental regulations pose challenges for traditional entrepreneurship, they also offer opportunities through various rules, regulations, and funding (Ricciardi et al., 2021; Aljuwaiber, 2020). Furthermore, with globalization offering entrepreneurs access to new markets and growth opportunities but also increasing competition (Pleitner, 2011), the need to adapt to different cultural contexts and navigate complex global supply chains and regulatory environments has become essential - especially with recent geopolitical developments impacting trade (Pleitner, 2011; WEforum 2022).

Personal Challenges

Understanding the most important personal challenges provides a deeper insight into the holistic facets of entrepreneurship and distinguishes between general entrepreneurial challenges and those specific to ADHD. This section focuses on three main challenges: Work-Life Balance, Mental Health, and Skill Development, as outlined by Stephan et al. (2023). Additionally, it examines challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, a subset of the case selection. Table 2.4: *Literature used for Personal Challenges* (Appendix) delineates the articles used.

Entrepreneurs often struggle to maintain a healthy *work-life balance* due to the demands of launching and managing a new business, with women facing additional pressures from traditional gender roles (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015; Stephan et al., 2023). Work-life balance is positively associated with firm growth and entrepreneur well-being (Stephan et al., 2023). Entrepreneurs' *mental health* can suffer under the stress and isolation often experienced in the start-up phase (Stephan et al., 2023). While entrepreneurship can be rewarding, high levels of stress can adversely affect an entrepreneur's mental health, limiting individual functioning (Kanchana et al., 2013). Mental health awareness and support mechanisms stimulate the well-being of entrepreneurs and their companies (Kanchana et al., 2013). Additionally, ongoing skill development is essential for the success and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures (Kanchana et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs must continuously update and enhance their skills to navigate a rapidly changing business landscape. Challenges include limited availability of training programs, high costs, and time constraints (Kanchana et al., 2013).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The following section provides an overview of the methodological approach utilized to address the research question: *What challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?* It encompasses exploratory methods, inductive and abductive reasoning, case analysis, and grounded theory.

Research Philosophy

This study follows an interpretive paradigm, which is suitable for understanding the subjective experiences of Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Quinlan, 2017). The interpretive approach enables an in-depth exploration of personal narratives and lived experiences (Quinlan, 2017). It situates meaning-making practices at the center of scientific exploration, which aligns well with the qualitative methodology used in this research.

The decision to use interpretivism is based on the research question: *What challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?* This question aims to uncover the nuanced personal experiences of Entrepreneurs with ADHD, both personally and professionally. This is a new field of research (Chapter 2.1), and that's why exploratory methods are used. By conducting semi-structured interviews with participants, the study seeks to explore their unique stories, perspectives on their situation(s), challenges they experience, and coping strategies they have developed over the years.

Research Approach

Exploratory

Individuals come with rich and deep perspectives, and all of them have different experiences venturing with ADHD. Exploratory research is necessary for topics that are not well-(academically) documented, complex, and still in the early stages of understanding (George, 2023). The intersection of ADHD and entrepreneurship is such a topic where little is yet known, especially when it is about how the actual practice of entrepreneurship is affected by neurodiversity. Entrepreneurs with ADHD may experience a range of issues – affected by their ADHD symptoms – which are different than their neurotypical counterparts. Hence, to understand the complex phenomenon of how ADHD impacts Entrepreneurs in diverse ways, an exploratory approach is needed.

Qualitative approach

Case study

A case study is a qualitative research method that involves an in-depth contextual analysis of a specific subject (the case). In this case, the case is a group of Entrepreneurs with ADHD. The purpose of the case study is to provide a detailed and broad understanding of the 'case' in question (Denscombe, 2014). A case study allows researchers to gain insights into the context and processes involved (George, 2023).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology in the social sciences that involves constructing theories through methodical data gathering and analysis (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Its purpose is to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, action, or interaction shaped by participants' views (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory allows researchers to

uncover patterns and relationships within the data, leading to the creation of a theory that is deeply rooted in empirical evidence (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory's open coding, constant comparison, and theoretical coding for data analysis are used in this research. Theoretically, data is collected and analyzed simultaneously, using emerging insights to inform further data collection (Chun Tie et al., 2019). The cycle continues until the categories are said to be "saturated," which means that no new information is being learned (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Practically, the experiences of Entrepreneurs with ADHD are questioned, following an iterative process that allows for ongoing learning and development, refinement, and modification of theories grounded in previous data collection rather than hypothesis (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

Interviews

Data collection involves semi-structured interviews with Entrepreneurs who have ADHD. Semi-structured interviews start with a clear focus on the interview guide (Appendix, *Interview Guide*), including preparatory questions and topics to be discussed (Denscombe, 2014). They are used when the aim is to obtain in-depth information on a topic and understand the reasoning behind the answers (George, 2023). The conversation was led with a simple, broad question, and the interviewees had the freedom to elaborate on anything they deemed important.

Follow-up questions are pre-prepared or made up on the spot (Appendix, *Interview Guide*). When working with individuals with ADHD, it is important to be firm about the main topics that need to be discussed, as they diverge from the topic when passion is involved (Canits et al., 2019). By allowing them to share their thoughts and perspectives on concepts they think relate to the question, deeper, more elaborate, and sometimes unexpected insights were found.

In-Interview Questionnaire

The short in-interview questionnaire (Appendix; *List 'Bedrijfsaspecten'*) was designed to cover a diverse range of topics intended to assist participants in identifying specific challenges of entrepreneurship and highlight those that significantly impacted their Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. As individuals with ADHD can exhibit a tendency toward limited focus and tunnel vision (Mason & Rosier, 2024), furnishing them with a comprehensive list of entrepreneurship-related aspects prompted them to diverge their thought process and deliberate on a broader spectrum.¹

Research Setting

This research was conducted in social settings, such as offices and cafés, to foster natural interactions. These settings were chosen to align with the study's objective of understanding the nuanced personal and professional experiences of Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Denscombe, 2014). Familiar environments help mitigate potential stress or discomfort that could arise in more formal settings, thereby promoting more candid and detailed responses (Denscombe, 2014). Additionally, the respondents were given the possibility to have a break or walk mid-interview to accommodate for their active ADHD nature.

¹. This exercise does not unduly influence the data collection process, as it is administered after the participant's comprehensive answers on their diagnosis, symptoms, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and best practices. Instead, its primary purpose is to facilitate a more expansive and detailed conversation.

3.2 Case Selection

For this research, the cases selected are Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Table 4.2). The necessary characteristics of these cases were:

- Entrepreneurs between the age of 24 and 65 years old;
- Are diagnosed with ADHD;
- Are the owner of a company;
- Are currently working in that company.

Table 4.2 shows the summary of case data. Ten entrepreneurs with diagnosed neurodivergence (ADD or ADHD) in ten different fields were interviewed and asked about their challenges. Regarding demographics (Table 4.2), 3 out of 10 cases had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Their entrepreneurial experience varied from 1 to 35 years, indicating a range from *recently starting out* to being *well-established* in their careers. They were located in various places, with 5 of them having an office in Rotterdam. While their years of experience varied, most of them had run a company before their current one. It is worth noting that many of the interviewees had stable partners, and all of them had worked or were currently working internationally. Additionally, most of them have completed a university degree.

Table 4.2
Summary of Case Data

Case	Neurodivergent Condition	Gender	Age	Age at Diagnosis	Highest Completed Education	Nationality	Years	Employment Position	Status
#1	ADHD	Male	44	32	Secondary School	Dutch (a)	4	Manual work	No Partner
#2	ADHD	Male	39	38	Applied University	Dutch	1.5	Coach & IT	Partner
#3	ADD	Female	32	24	University	Bulgarian	1	Marketing (freelance)	Partner (Difficulties)
#4	ADHD	Male	28	28	Master's Degree	Ukrainian	5	Networking	No Partner
#5	ADD	Male	23	13	Master's Degree	Dutch	1.5	Innovation Management	Partner
#6	ADHD	Male	49	46	Master's Degree	Dutch	17	Various jobs	Partner (BV together)
#7	ADHD	Male	48	38	Applied University	Dutch	15	IT & Freelance	Married with 3 children
#8	ADHD	Male	48	8	Applied University	Dutch (b)	25	Strategic Planning	Partner (Neurotypical)
#9	ADD	Male	33	9	University	Dutch	15	Real Estate	No Partner
#10	ADHD	Female	56	32	Master's Degree	Dutch	35	Company Executive	Partner

Footnotes: (a) Raised Africa (6 countries) (b) Lived in Africa for 20+ years (3 countries)
Note: All of the participants work or have worked internationally

Sampling Strategy

This group of respondents was selected using convenient sampling, a non-probability sampling technique (Sedgwick, 2013). This approach was chosen due to its cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and easy accessibility. Part of the group (3/10) was approached through the

educational program “Onbeperkt Ondernemen” (Entrepreneurship Unlimited). This program is specifically designed for entrepreneurs who may have unique challenges related to their mind or body but who are driven and passionate about entrepreneurship. It was developed after research showed that this group often faces unique challenges and requires tailored support to succeed (Hatak et al., 2021). Another part of the sample (7/10) reached out after a post on LinkedIn (Appendix; *LinkedIn Post*).

Sampling Bias

Sampling bias, lack of variety, and potential researcher bias are inherent to convenience sampling (Chen et al., 2021). When participants are not randomly selected from a larger population, the sample might not represent the entire population of Entrepreneurs with ADHD. Additionally, when convenience sampling, researchers may choose participants who are easily accessible or have similar characteristics, which can limit the variety of opinions and experiences represented in the sample (Chen et al., 2021). Lastly, researchers may select participants who can provide data that supports their theory, leading to researcher bias (Chen et al., 2021; Denscombe, 2014).

To mitigate this potential bias, both convenience and probability sampling were used. Specifically, random participants were selected from both groups of Respondents (Entrepreneurship Unlimited (10 respondents) and LinkedIn (27 respondents)).

Ethical Considerations

Along with biases, ethical considerations are critical aspects of the study. To address potential dilemmas such as privacy concerns and misrepresentations, clear guidelines for the participants were provided (Appendix; *interview guide*). The participants were informed that their data would only be used for research purposes and that their anonymity would be preserved (Appendix; *interview guide*). Before conducting the interviews, informed consent was obtained to ensure the participants understood the research context, their role in the study, and any potential risks associated with participation (Appendix; *informed consent*).

Additional verbal consent was given during the interviews to record the conversations. Efforts were made to establish a comfortable and respectful environment, allowing participants to freely share sensitive and personal information – including but not limited to the informed consent form, sharing the interview protocol, sharing interview themes and main questions, and iterative cycles of reflection (Appendix; *interview guide*).

3.3 Data Collection

Data Collection Approach

Interviews

The study's primary data collection approach involves using the semi-structured interview technique. This method is designed to generate first-hand information from the participants. The interview process is adjustable and reinforced by follow-up questions, probes, and comments to ensure accuracy and clarity (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Semi-structured interviews invoke a balance of structure and spontaneity, allowing for preconceived thought-provoking questions while also gathering important additional information through follow-up questions – and giving space to the vigorous nature of passionate individuals with ADHD.

Interview Length

The length of an interview should be determined by the complexity of the research topic and the participants' willingness and ability to provide detailed responses (Kvale, 1996). According to Kvale (1996), researchers should aim for a rich and detailed understanding of the participants' experiences, attitudes, and perspectives, which typically requires a 60 to 90 minute interview. Veal (2017) suggests that a semi-structured interview of at least 30 minutes is necessary to obtain in-depth information. In consideration of the participant's availability, interviews were scheduled for 60 to 90 minutes, with the possibility of extending the duration of the participant if desired. In 3 out of 10 cases, interviews lasted 2.5 hours, not only for data generation but also to allow participants to fully share their stories and address important topics. Longer interviews helped reach data saturation quickly.

Iterative Approach

After transcribing three or four interviews, the initial transcripts should be analyzed before conducting further interviews using Grounded Theory data analysis (Chun Tie et al., 2019). As a result of reviewing questions that are (not) yielding the desired narrative data, some questions were modified to gather more valuable insights.

Theme development for Interview Questions

The operationalization of key concepts – translating broad concepts from the theoretical framework into specific, measurable elements that can be explored through interviews – was guided by the theoretical framework and iteratively refined through the initial interviews. The process involved defining and breaking down abstract concepts that were deemed necessary following the theoretical framework, into specific themes and questions meant to capture data on various aspects of the entrepreneurial experience influenced by ADHD. The initial main interview themes throughout the data collection were:

ADHD Diagnosis – aimed to confirm the ADHD diagnoses of the participant, how and when they got diagnosed, what their symptoms were beforehand, what changed after, and whether they understood their diagnoses.

ADHD Symptoms – initially not included, this theme was added after the second interview. It became clear that understanding participants' specific ADHD symptoms was important for identifying how these might potentially relate to their entrepreneurial challenges.

Entrepreneurial Strengths— aimed at identifying strengths that Entrepreneurs with ADHD possess. What they were proud of, what got them this far, what they were often complimented on, and what gave them an edge in the entrepreneurial landscape. This was a topic to discover if the strengths and challenges/problems of Entrepreneurs with ADHD are related. Additionally, it made the participants feel confident before going into their challenges; and contributed to a better understanding of ADHD for the researcher.

Entrepreneurial Weaknesses— this was previously in the interview guide, but removed after interview 7. While all participants were asked to formulate a SWOT about themselves, the weaknesses seemed to have major overlap with the Entrepreneurial Challenges. These were merged.

Entrepreneurial Challenges—The participants were asked to describe their Entrepreneurial challenges in various ways, mostly focusing on personal and professional challenges they experienced while practicing entrepreneurship. Additionally, the challenges were captured through a short in-interview questionnaire.

Best Practices / Solutions—This theme aimed to cover the strategies and practices individuals with entrepreneurial orientation and ADHD symptoms use during entrepreneurship to become effective in their personal lives and run a business. It was also asked what they would tell themselves if they could return to when they started a business. These findings are discussed in the Epilogue.

The initial set of interview questions included two main open-ended questions and three pre-generated sub-questions derived directly from the theoretical framework to facilitate an in-depth exploration (Appendix; *Interview Guide*). The interview guide was iteratively adapted during the interviews, and repudiated questions were removed.

Interview protocol

After email confirmation, the location (online/in person) was specified. At least 30 minutes was scheduled for interview preparation before starting with a welcoming explanation and securing the individual's consent for recording. The interview lasted approximately 60 to 210 minutes and concluded with giving a gift. Proceeding, a direct analysis of the interviewee's persona and challenges was conducted, the notes were organized, and an initial analysis was completed.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data Analyzation Approach

The data was immediately analyzed after being collected over three weeks. The analysis took the following sections into account: the Interviewee's persona; observations during the interview; compiled list of Entrepreneurial Challenges; compiled list of Entrepreneurial Strengths and ADHD symptoms potentially relating to Entrepreneurial Challenges; written analysis of Entrepreneurial Problems and the self-attributed ESE, compiled list of Best Practices, and contradictions (Appendix: *Post Interview Analysis*). The official data preparation started after the initial post-interview analysis and when all the data was successfully gathered.

Data preparation

During the data preparation, the initial data, recorded on either Smart-Recorder (in-person interview) or Zoom (online interview), was transcribed using turboscribe. Subsequently, the documents were manually checked.

Coding Process

Following, all individual documents were officially analysed using the Gioia method. The Gioia method specifically caters to inductive case studies to install “inductive rigor” (Gioia et al., 2013). According to this method, the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews will be analysed through open coding, first to identify first-order categories and eventually reduce to second-order categories to create overarching themes and quotations (Appendix; *Code Book*)

During the first-order analysis, the terms and codes related to the interviewee were retrieved (Gioia et al., 2013). Sentences that are closely related to the interview quotations were highlighted, and preliminary themes were listed in a separate analytic memo, as discussed by Hedlund-de Witt (2013) – further named as the first-order concepts. The second-order analysis retrieved aggregated concepts and themes (Gioia et al., 2013) – further named second-order codes. This analysis entails reanalysing and rearranging the data code from the first-order analysis. It explores interrelationships across different codes and serves to develop a thematic coherence from the first-order concepts. After a list of first-order concepts is aggregated into second-order codes, these interrelationships are compiled into 5 aggregate dimensions: ADHD Diagnoses, ADHD symptoms, Entrepreneurial Strengths, Entrepreneurial Problems/Challenges, Best Practices / Solutions

The first-order and second-order codes and subsequent themes are shown in a data structure (Appendix; *Code Book*). The last part of the analysis will generate a data table (Table 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5), which will include a demonstration of the themes and dimensions along with examples of interesting and useful explanatory quotes (Gioia et al., 2013). After this, the first-order and second-order codes are used to delineate new findings, find connections, and potentially create grounded theories. This is summarized using figures and tables (Chapter 5.2).

Data Visualisation

Data is visualized by a codebook of primary research data (Appendix; *Code Book*). Data Tables (Chapter 4), Summary Tables (Chapter 5), and various conceptual models showing the relation between the different aggregated dimensions (Chapter 5).

Credibility of Research Findings

All aspects of the research were conducted in accordance with the NWO Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

4 Results

Overview

The following sections depict the findings based on themes in the data structure/table (Table: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). The results follow up on a post-interview analysis, providing an overall overview of each participant, randomized in order from 1 to 10 (Appendix; *post-interview analysis*). This is followed by an across-case analysis that highlights the links between individual answers and common factors across the interviews. Finally, the findings will be presented in themes per aggregate dimension, Challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD, and Origins of Challenges, constituting out of ADHD Symptoms and ADHD-specific Entrepreneurial Strengths. The results are subsequently discussed in the Discussion (Chapter 5). Specific quotes, codes, and grounding of each code can be found in the *Code Book* (Appendix), as the main text includes only the most essential and illustrative quotations.

4.1 Across Case Analysis

Entrepreneurial Challenges

This section is focused on uncovering valuable insights for our analysis. The interviews were started by indirectly probing for problems and challenges, allowing entrepreneurs to freely discuss their past and current startup experiences, including any failures. Once the entrepreneurs shared everything they wanted, they were presented with a comprehensive list of business aspects. Through this list, they were asked to indicate whether they viewed each one as a strength or a problem, including their Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) when considering each aspect. Out of the subsequent analysis and the Code Book (Appendix; *code book*), the *Overarching concepts of Entrepreneurial Challenges and the number of times mentioned* **Figure 4.1** (Appendix) and Table 4.1 emerged. This section directly relates to the research question: “Which challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience”?

The overall challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD within both Professional and Personal management can be subdivided into main categories: communication, executive functioning/productivity, energy management, and self-perception. These results will subsequently be discussed in the discussion (Table 5.1)

Table 4.1*Summary of Challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD*

Aggregate dimension	2 nd Order Code	1 st order Codes	Supporting Quotations from data
Professional Management, managing a business, is a challenge due to financial management, procrastination & periods of low passion.	Management	Functioning in Context	"I need context to function." #7 "Following every customer request without strong reasoning is draining" #6
		Financial Management	"I can do the admin. It will take all of my energy. It will not kill me but it will actually make a day look like a month. The moment that I get into it I lose touch with everything because then everything around me becomes a blur." #2 "I outsource administration to my dad" #7 "I tried [hiring an accountant]... And then you get emails. You need to deliver this by this date. You need to deliver that by this date. It's only adding pressure." #2
		Overview	"There is so much happening in my head" #8 "I constantly forget [...] to call back" #1
		People Management	"It's super difficult to keep people aligned (who are not getting paid)." #1 "I cannot lead a team" #10
		Productivity	"If it's up to me I start four companies in one day. And that doesn't work. [I need to correct] Myself again and again. No this is the path. No this is the way." #10 "Focus very important. Head of side business... Can go in all directions." #10
		Procrastination	"I procrastinate. I really know that I have deadlines to hit for example and I keep really putting everything off until I really have to work nonstop to make the deadline" #3 "The problem really [...] mostly the procrastinating and the starting a task". #5
		Complicated tasks hinder productivity	"I shouldn't have too complicated tasks. Because then I can't do them. Because then... My head is spinning." #10
		Dosing Energy	"Dosing my energy is the issue... When you're gone, I'm tired. That is not because you ask boring questions. Quite the opposite. It's intriguing. So I give everything" #2 "If I [I'm interested], I want to know all, and lose overview" #8
		Sales	"For me, so when you look at my socials, it will be empty. I am not a person that's out there... I don't see the value in the things that I do or sharing those things." "I have trouble finding clients" #3 "Cold sales & routine tasks" #7 "I cannot sell: "Nothing" #9
		Business Processes	Pricing "I find it difficult to price myself" #3 "It took me very long to figure out how to let the market set my price" #10 "Setting an Adequate price is difficult" "I believe in working for passion over money, but that creates problems" #2
	Marketing	"Developing the brand narrative" (4/10)	
	Market research	Estimating customer demand for new products (5/10)	

		Doing the boring stuff	"I think [it's a cool product], but forget to listen [to what others think]". "Where I'm not good at. Is. Doing boring things. I'm not very good at it anyway. Executing things. So I'm not good at that. Making invoices. Disastrous." #7
Communication specifically writing, talking (structuring thoughts) and learning present specific issues.	Communication	Writing	"That sometimes means that you have a super good vision. But that you just can't communicate that clearly. Because it's so clear in your head. But not in your things."
		Forgetting	"Keeping everyone up to speed around the same time with the same level of detail." #1
		Difficulty networking (with just 'anybody')	"I'm not such a good networker... There are few people I really connect with. So I have a lot of people I can have a nice chat with." #10 "So I can't make contact with important stakeholders. Yes. Exchange. Other. Information with other people. I can do that very well. Because then I don't have to do my work. And I can make everything very simple." #10 "Connecting [...] [I connect with a story]" #2
	Talking	Too much	"A lot of talking. A lot of... It's negotiating. And you have to create charm. I've been told, Mark talks so much. That we say but yes. We put a signature underneath. Because we're done with him." #9 "That can also be too much for many people. And that means that I attract a certain audience. Which is greatly affected by my energy." #10
		Non-Linear	"I start a sentence. My head is already taking the next step. And then halfway through the sentence I'm already going the other way. I think I only finish half of my sentences." #10 "So in my brain I quickly go from question to solution. But it's hard to reproduce. How do you say that? To a less jumpy brain. I call that linear people." #7
	Learning	With passion	"Can only learn when something is presented in an engaging way" #6 "I couldn't come along with the regular school system" #8 "Down the rabbit hole" #7
		Different methods	"And then there was time for that. Because yes 90% of our trade fell out in the first two quarters. So then you have to make use of yourself. So with a large loan from the bank we just bought a lot of forms of education - for me mostly lectures and podcasts, these methods work well for me while others simply don't. And yes that paid off quickly." #6 "Nobody understood my creativity" #1
Due to executive dysfunction, impulsivity and a neurotypical society, there might be problems with Professional Management	Organization	Clearly Communicating	"You can ask me about any element of the business and I can tell you exactly what it is... but if you want me to write it down in a document, then I am completely wrong." #1
		Repetitive tasks	"Administration takes a lot of Energy, it makes one day feel like a month" #2 "Making invoices. Disastrous." #7 Establishing an CRM (7/10)
		Execution	"I'm great at thinking it but I can't build it" #4 Compartmentalizing into smaller segments "Before even starting, I'm already thinking how much I'm going to struggle finishing it – I don't want to hand in something [bad]" #5
		Sticking to the plan	Following through the plan (8/10)

			"I can follow a plan, but not my own [...] and only if I find it interesting" #9
Personal Management	Decision Making		"Difficultly choosing what is the best when I have so many good options" #4
	Mental Health		"I ended up with a burnout. Left shortly afterwards. And I was well motivated by my coach and a lot of people that I spoke to I decided to start my own thing.." #3 Overworking (4/10) Prone to addiction (4/10)
Self Confidence	Need for autonomy		"Autonomy. Really very important to me. It's not just that I'm an entrepreneur... but that you just have a boss above you or a manager... I thought that autonomy was very nice." #9 "I have trouble with people micromanaging" #8
	Afraid of Mistakes		"So afraid to make mistakes... But I need to do this, I need to do that. And then it's like, yeah, but you need to hire an accountant or hire an admin organization." #2
	Not thinking like others / comparing to neurotypical people		"I remember when I started with myself. I said I just think logically. Until someone told me. That's not logical thinking. Because if that was logical thinking. Then it had happened for a long time." #7 "Right now yes. At the time I was diagnosed I was diagnosed with depression before I was diagnosed with ADHD. I know that having ADHD led to me burning out at work because I kept comparing myself to other people who seemed to be having less difficulties doing things that I was struggling with." #3
	The system is wrong		"I think the biggest problem with neurodiverse people likeothers. Is that you have relatively little confidence. Because the current school system is about reproducing things. Not about solving problems." #7
	Not fitting in		"I've always tried to fit in, if I didn't, they'd bully me" #8 "I've always tried to justify my actions, at one time I just stopped. I do not need to justify to neurtypical people" #10
Impulsivity	Things don't go naturally		"I think we are a little more sensitive anyway. That we are a little more open. But if that factor of insecurity is added. Because I also know for myself that things don't go naturally for me." #10
	ADHD seen as a disease		"Do you feel like you have a disease? You should be normal. That you try to adapt to be able to You need a DSM to have medication." #7 "I'm taking medication right? I don't function" #8
	Imposter Syndrome		"You always suffer from imposter syndrome." #10 "Even when I'm on the stage I don't feel like I earned it". #7 "Cannot be that I did this (right)" #6
	Difficulty controlling impulses		"I have a very addictive nature" #8 "I need a way to let go" #2
Motivation	Sensation seeking		"It was so boring, I just went to drive my car with 200km an hour" #6
	Consistency		"My main challenge is staying consistent. So really working every day towards something because it's easy for me. But not working when I'm not feeling it, but its something I can train myself to do" #3 "I will [start a new venture] because that's what I'm good at. [...] not detail [work]" #8

(1) Professional Management

Management involves a few difficulties the interviewees have mentioned: effectively overseeing a business, organizing and maintaining financial records, facing management struggles, meeting business deadlines and challenges, dealing with authority, leading a team, estimating customer demand for new products, requiring extended preparation time, meeting deadlines, and initiating and managing projects. One of these is consistent motivation and productivity – as management involves completing routine tasks: “Administration takes a lot of energy, it makes one day feel like a month” which in some cases can lead to extreme procrastination and reluctance to continue “The problem really [...] mostly the procrastinating and the starting a task”. Starting tasks is difficult, and finishing them is equally challenging as some strive for perfection: “Before even starting, I’m already thinking how much I’m going to struggle finishing it – I don’t want to hand in something [bad]” Mundane tasks are especially difficult without context or a framework. As a result of inactivation of the DSM (Chapter 2.1), managing short-term focus is tough. This partly relates to energy regulation: “Dosing my energy is the issue... When you're gone, I'm tired. That is not because you ask boring questions. Quite the opposite. It's intriguing. So I give everything.” And there is a tendency to take on too much, relating to passion: “If I [’m interested], I want to know all”, which – together with a difficulty delegating tasks - might lead to overworking, or finishing tasks. Hence, prioritizing focus and avoiding distractions is essential, and structured environments work best, although organizing this for themselves can be difficult “I can follow a plan, but not my own [...] [and only if I find it] interesting”.

(2) Personal Management

Personal management is a problem in various aspects, specifically in decision-making, as Entrepreneurs with ADHD often have many interests and ideas: “Difficultly choosing what is the best when I have so many good options”. Other personal management challenges include burnout, issues with medication & problems remembering small tasks. Additionally, individuals may experience mental health & well-being challenges, feeling overwhelmed and being prone to addiction. Relating this to entrepreneurship, it can be seen that challenges are often in organization: struggling to write down different business elements, facing administrative challenges, difficulties sticking to plans, organizational and business setup issues, and being unable to do things they’re not interested in.

Another prominent challenge is struggling with self-confidence. Having always been told that you’re doing things wrong and having always done things differently; “That's not logical thinking”, often not being praised for it, causes fear of making mistakes; “So afraid to make mistakes”, self-presentation issues, and an overall low self-confidence: “So afraid to make mistakes... But I need to do this, I need to do that.” This is only made bigger by the fact of never feeling really understood: “I've always tried to fit in, if I didn't, they'd bully me” or not thinking ‘typically’; “I said I just think logically. Until someone told me. That's not logical thinking.” They’ve always tried to fit, but often don’t. This has created a strong case of imposter syndrome (10/10); “Cannot be that I did this (right)” and not believing success. Lastly, it adds to the tendency to start many different things, just to avoid having to face difficult situations: “I will [start a new venture] because that’s what I’m good at. [...] not detail [work]”.

(3) Communication

Communication – while fitting into both Personal and Professional Management - poses significant challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD, warranting an independent category. The challenges manifest in three main contexts: forgetfulness (e.g., plans, things said), difficulty

forming words and sentences, and trouble expressing thoughts clearly. In particular, individuals find writing coherently and complete sentences challenging, especially when required to use 'neurotypical' language: Typically, Entrepreneurs with ADHD tend to jump from point A to point E, whereas neurotypical entrepreneurs follow a more structured A-B-C-D-E process. “So in my brain I quickly go from question to solution. But it's hard to reproduce. How do you say that? To a less jumpy brain. I call that linear people.” With a consequence that neurotypical people cannot follow.

While visualization can be helpful, there are still difficulties in articulating business ideas coherently in writing: “Because it's so clear in your head. But not in your things [writing]”. Furthermore, Entrepreneurs with ADHD may struggle with talking excessively, repeating words in their head, or mentally moving on to the next steps while speaking, leading to a lack of focus on others and tunnel vision “I start a sentence. My head is already taking the next step. And then halfway through the sentence I’m already going the other way. I think I only finish half of my sentences.” Additionally, they may encounter challenges in social interactions (talking too much, loud, or solving unwanted problems), marketing; “I think [it’s a cool product], but forget to listen [to what others think]”, and structuring their thoughts clearly: “I start a sentence. My head is already taking the next step. And then halfway through the sentence I’m already going the other way. I think I only finish half of my sentences.”.

Learning involves being slow to grasp some things but very quick to understand others. This particularly relates to how the content is presented and whether it is an interesting subject. Additionally, it means that when an entrepreneur with ADHD is very interested, they can delve deeply into the topic, surpassing (by far) what they need to know – and taking a lot of time; “Down the rabbit hole”. They also face comprehension challenges, and the current learning methods often don’t work well for them. The key is to deliver methods with passion: “Can only learn when something is presented in an engaging way.”.

4.2 Origins of Entrepreneurial Challenges

From the data retrieved, several clear challenges have emerged (Table 4.1). Notably, the data indicates that most of these challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD stem specifically from ADHD symptoms, such as Executive dysfunction, Inattention, Organisational difficulties, and even Emotional Regulation (see Figure 5.2), as well as additional factors such as education methods and support. Interestingly, some challenges also arise from their strengths, which, if not well managed, can turn into difficulties. For instance, high passion can be a double-edged sword: “If I’m interested, I want to know everything, but I lose the overview”. Hence, in this section, the specific ADHD symptoms and Entrepreneurial Strengths of Entrepreneurs with ADHD are summarized. This will add to a better understanding of the challenges they experience and can indirectly contribute to the research question: *What challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?*. The findings of this section will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, specifically in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

ADHD Symptoms

Table 4.3

Summary of AD(H)D Symptom Data

Aggregate dimension	2 nd Order Code	1 st order Codes	Supporting Quotations from data
(1) (In)attention is a common symptom (all cases) relating to not being able to focus or forgetting tasks / details	Focus	No focus when topic isn't engaging	"I cannot learn without an engaging teacher" #9 "I cannot learn without feeling for the topic" #5 "I can read a page 10 times and not remember what it says" #6 "If I like the topic I immediately deep dive" #4
		Racing thoughts (mentioned with Hyperactivity)	"I'm flying 16 million directions." #10 "And every word I say jumps in my head like three different hooks." #10 "Without medication, there is so much happening in my brain" #8
		Forgetting details / tasks	"I often forget appointments" #1 "If I don't bring a note I come home with everything" #10 "I always forget to call back" #1 "I need to use a calendar, and even then I forget" #3
(2) Emotional Regulation stems from a lifestyle with adverse Personal Regulation and high context dependency.	Personal Regulation	Impatience	"I can be very impatient when people don't understand things that are very clear to me" #6 "I'm just to preface recently it hasn't been working out that well for me. And I'm struggling a bit more. So there's a lot of things happening going on in my head where I'm really I wouldn't say I'm comparing myself that much. I think it's more so feeling inadequate." #3 "I've stopped trying to justify my brain" #10 "Because it just... Sometimes it goes very well. But if it goes very well it goes very well. If it goes badly it goes very badly" #9 "Sometimes it just becomes too much" #3 "I'm always on, or rather, my brain is always on" #10
		High highs & low lows	"I don't think I would be a very ideal employee. Entrepreneurship it's more of an escape strategy for me. Not to run into all the hard sides of my personality all the time." #6 "I couldn't work for a boss, I always knew it better"
		Authority	"For me, ADHD also means I do not have a lot of friends because I don't want a lot of people in my private environment because of all the expectations that are then being brought upon me." #2 "Medication, is like opening a curtain, finally, I can see clearly"
		Forgetting to connect with people → no friends	"I don't want to tax the already taxed" #2 "When I see someone getting bullied, a haze comes over my eyes" #8
		Driven by justice	"I can be very impatient when people don't understand things that are very clear to me. And that's especially my wife." #6; "I need context [...] to function" #7
		Others influencing mood	
Environmental Regulation			

(3) Repetitive tasks, or difficult/complex tasks are often a barrier and have a big impact on performance. Often when passion is high, Executive Dysfunction is low	Executive Dysfunction	Task Initiation	<p>"I think, again, sort of by very standard definition of ADHD is you're often hyperactive, but sometimes completely... Have like zero ability to do anything. Just the contrast of those two things right? [...] I have sort of the gift of having ADHD and really I think being able to context switch very quickly." #4</p> <p>"Switching into first gear that's a very big problem. So when I have a deadline then there's no problem really but when I don't which is with most of the things when you have a business then it's difficult for me to activate myself and do all of the little tasks that have to be done." "I stare blankly at the screen, willing myself to do something" #5</p> <p>"My main challenge is staying consistent. So really working every day towards something because it's easy for me now to make plans. This is also something that I learned that I trained myself to do." #3</p> <p>"This is the standard struggle of a software engineer to keep starting small products and then leaving them at the 60% mark because yeah, you kind of, I guess, lost interest in it or something. Very same thing here even with a business like building small features, building kind of extensions of your product, that happens every now and again." #4</p> <p>"Sometimes I'm very high in energy, and sometimes I can't get myself to move"</p>
		Consistent motivation (with routine tasks)	<p>"That's where I also started to notice my first struggles with administration because I had no idea how to do it. I just managed by filling out the tax forms, doing it wrong again and again, and getting one fine after the other."</p> <p>"Making choices. I find that difficult. But I'm sure about it. Making choices." #9</p> <p>"If I can choose, I would start a new business every month" #10</p> <p>"Focus very important. Head of side business... Can go in all directions." #10</p>
(4) Difficulty sticking to planning & following (neurotypical) Organisation.	Organization	Difficulty with administrative tasks	<p>"That's where I also started to notice my first struggles with administration because I had no idea how to do it. I just managed by filling out the tax forms, doing it wrong again and again, and getting one fine after the other."</p> <p>"Making choices. I find that difficult. But I'm sure about it. Making choices." #9</p> <p>"If I can choose, I would start a new business every month" #10</p> <p>"Focus very important. Head of side business... Can go in all directions." #10</p>
		Decision Making	<p>"Making choices. I find that difficult. But I'm sure about it. Making choices." #9</p> <p>"If I can choose, I would start a new business every month" #10</p> <p>"Focus very important. Head of side business... Can go in all directions." #10</p>
		Difficulty sticking to plans	<p>"Focus very important. Head of side business... Can go in all directions." #10</p>

Footnotes: (a) Hyperactivity is often mentioned in the context of leading to a decrease in - your or others - focus (fidgeting) or executive dysfunction. (b) Racing thoughts are often mentioned along with difficulty in communicating clearly, thinking words without saying them, or thinking that you said something without having said it. (c) Task completion is merged with Executive Dysfunction, as delineated by starting things and not finishing them or wrapping up projects.

(1) (in)Attention

Difficulty keeping focus when the information is not stimulating, leading to a cause, or presented in an engaging way is often (3/10) mentioned in the context of education or business processes (2/10) – specifically related to “easy” tasks: “I always forget to call back”. Additionally, (in)attention relates to inconsistent focus and difficulty completing tasks (without structure or deadlines) (9/10).

(2) Emotional Regulation

Frequent outbursts, especially when feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or tired (periods of high emotion) are common: “Sometimes it just becomes too much”. Difficulty regulating emotions often stems from issues with authority; “I couldn’t work for a boss, I always knew it better” a strong drive for justice; “When I see someone getting bullied, a haze covers my eyes,” which can affect emotional control when something that is perceived as unjust is observed. It was also mentioned that it's easy for situations to become easily heated or easily awesome (2/10) “I’m always on”, which – often mentioned – is exhausting.

On the other side lies a difficulty with self-perception. Often, the case compares themselves to neurotypical people, mistakenly believing their cognitive processes are similar (due to lack of information/guidance), and not knowing how to level (their thoughts) “I’m always doing it wrong [for the neurotypical people]”. This misunderstanding leads to communication difficulties, feelings of inadequacy “I think it’s more so feeling inadequate”, and heightened sensitivity to feedback “I’ve stopped trying to justify my brain”. Societal norms emphasize conformity to neurotypical standards, which worsens insecurity, perfectionism, and constant self-comparison. These individuals often struggle to make connections, feel isolated, and experience low self-confidence from a young age despite trying to fit in.

(3) Executive dysfunction

Individuals struggle when there isn’t enough context provided, or when the information is too fragmented and not well-connected: “I need context [...] to function”. Sometimes, there are simply too many choices; “Making choices. I find that difficult. But I'm sure about it. Making choices”; or a desire to do everything [anything else] to avoid taking action. They are easily distracted (10/10), except in hyperfocus (3/10), and may forget tasks they were doing, moving on to other things that come to mind. Getting started and staying motivated after the initial burst of enthusiasm wanes is generally difficult. Inconsistency (2/10) “My main challenge is staying consistent” and repetitiveness are very challenging. Routine tasks - such as mundane tasks, creating invoices, or anything related to finances (8/10) have someone doing their finances) - are particularly difficult. Additionally, starting a task is challenging and they may struggle to begin because they want to do it perfectly (2/10). This leads to significant procrastination, which was mentioned in 9 out of 10 cases. It was also noted that they avoid tasks requiring significant thought.

(4) Organization

Struggling with administrative tasks, repetitive tasks that drain energy, adhering to a plan, completing tasks, and sticking to priority lists due to finding new things more interesting are all frequently heard ADHD symptoms relating to the organization. Other symptoms include easily losing focus, feeling compelled to act quickly on everything, neglecting necessary tasks, and finding it difficult to stick to plans despite being able to make them easily. Specifically, it's difficult to wrap up projects when the initial passion is gone: “head [...] can go in all directions”

Entrepreneurial Strengths

Table 4.4
Summary of Strengths of Entrepreneurs with ADHD

Aggregate dimension	2 nd Order Code	1 st order Codes	Supporting Quotations from data
<p>(1) A high tendency for Problem Solving arises from always having to adapt to the status quo and heightened creativity.</p>	Flexibility	Switching topics easily	<p>"So you can ask me about any element of the company and I can tell you exactly what it is, who does what, what is needed, what the problem is, but if you want me to write it in a document, then I am completely wrong." #1</p>
		Adaptation	<p>"I'm always the best to ask in a crisis situation" #10 "And how do I compensate for that? Yeah by working without break for until it's done if there's a deadline. Because when the danger of not getting it done looms over the horizon so to say then I can focus because there's push behind it there's stress oh shit I've got to get this done." #7 "My Flight or Fight mode always on" #2</p>
		Quick Thinking	<p>"So what I can do very well. Solve problems. Analyze. Fast." #9 "But also that you understand. Why. Things work. In my brain. So. I often explain. I just really like solving puzzles." #7</p>
			<p>"Oh I want to improve something. I see something. And I've actually had that with everything. Then I think. Oh this can be much more efficient. And much better. And then I just notice." #9</p>
Creativity	Creativity	<p>"I've got so many ideas, continuously" #10 "Ik ben altijd helemaal mee dus heb ik besloten om een entrepreneur te worden... Ik had altijd een lijst vol ideeën voor producten oplossingen en services." #6 "I wanted to do more creative work. Because I am a creative and I always have been." #3</p>	
		Writing	<p>"Look with that writing for that online post. I share a philosophy. I share a suspicion. Or a feeling or something. And then it's also the art of smearing and smearing a bit. To make his text so that it becomes seductive." #6</p>
		Networking	<p>"I've learned a lot and there are some elements to it, especially with networking and dealing with people who are not getting it. This is something I'm very good at and I've learned this by trying that first business." #7</p>
		Talking	<p>"I can talk for ours, and really bring someone along in my vision" #1 "I cannot write things down, but when I pitch, it all works very well" #4</p>
Communication	Team Building	<p>"Whenever I have an idea, Passion.. I just need of be alone with someone in a room and that person is also passionate" #10</p>	
	Leadership	<p>"Depends. So it really depends whether it's an individual project or a group project. Often in group settings I take on a leadership role naturally." #5 "I naturally like to take the lead" #8</p>	
(2) From the heart / with so much passion / might present natural born Leadership	Team		

(3) Strategic Thinking	Meta-Overview	Teamwork	"In my team, no one has 'has to do's', you just work the way works best for you" #1 "Maar we zijn allemaal heel doelrijke mensen. Dit was ook nodig voor de organisatie die we proberen te creëren." #1
		Wanting to do good for the team	"So what a complaint was from the team actually was that I kind of take these things on the chin myself and then I make them softer and then I communicate them to the team so they don't have the same punch in the face." #1 "We are working very hard. You have to take on that time as a project leader." #5
		Do good	"The moment you touch justice, I become fury and hell. And I'm so sharp, I don't know where the energy comes from." #2 "Now that you're an entrepreneur. That you can really work for something." #9
		Empathy	"ADHD people or ADD people are incredibly honest, and there's this crazy need for a righteous world... everybody has such a drive for a righteous and good world." #1
		Work towards the mission	"It's nice. For me as a person, it's much nicer to sort of work closer to the mission in a way. [...] You feel slightly detached from the mission of the company and the original mission of the founders. In a way, it's much nicer to be closer to the mission that you're actually working on yourself." #5 "Now that you're an entrepreneur. That you can really work for something." #9 "I then pull open twelve drawers. And so I can also look through all twelve drawers in one go whether something is a good idea or not." #10
(4) Generally positivity & reflection leads to Self-Awareness	Self Awareness		"The other side of what I like about being an entrepreneur is that the sky seems to be the limit." #4 "I need to prove it not only to myself, but to them that I can do it" #8
		Mindset	"If I see a problem, I just want to solve it" #10 "It's [potential] there, I can feel it" #6
		Reflection	"Hours, what do I say, days of reflection" #10 "I never understood what I did wrong" #8

(1) Problem-Solving

The findings indicate that Entrepreneurs with ADHD have strong and creative problem-solving competencies. They think outside the box, make fast decisions, and work consistently without breaks whenever necessary. They can adapt quickly to challenges; “I’m always the best to ask in a crisis situation”, “My flight or fight mode is always on,” and “I have a flexible, quick, thinking mindset”. “So what I can do very well. Solve problems. Analyze. Fast.”

(2) Passionate (Leadership)

Answers to questions about responsibility indicate that Entrepreneurs with ADHD might have something of a ‘natural born leadership’, which manifests in quick decision-making, taking necessary actions in times of need, and assuming responsibility for the team. In addition to this, they can strongly communicate visions “I can talk for hours, and really bring someone along in my vision” and passion “Whenever I have an idea, I just need to be alone with someone in a room and that person is also passionate”. They are good at motivating the team and giving a strong pitch: “I cannot write things down, but when I pitch, It all works very well”. In addition to that, the interviews depicted a tendency towards fairness (9/10): “The moment you touch justice, I become fury and hell. And I'm so sharp, I don't know where the energy comes from.” And want to be just leaders with integrity and the desire to make a positive social impact “Now that you're an entrepreneur. That you can really work for something.” This partly leads to wanting to do good for the team, overworking, but also being very resourceful when having to find solutions to problems within the team.

(3) Strategic Thinking

The next very important strength of an entrepreneur with ADHD is their ability to maintain a meta overview. They are highly proficient at seeing the entire picture “I can think very strategically. I can easily put myself in this position. Above the situation [..]. And I can easily take an eagle position” which enables them to keep track of everything “You can pull me out of a meeting with all the financial people and drop me in the marketing corner and in one second I switch, and there's no problem for me whatsoever”, and giving a strategic analysis with regards to all components of the company: “I then pull open twelve drawers. And so I can also look through all twelve drawers in one go whether something is a good idea or not.”. Findings relate this to high performance in market analysis & position, understanding industry trends, and giving strategic recommendations due to their ability to think about multiple things simultaneously (10/10) and having great topic-switching skills.

(4) Self-Awareness

In terms of mindset, findings indicate that Entrepreneurs with ADHD exhibit a strong work ethic, often working without breaks when necessary and persevering due to their aversion to failure: “I need to prove it not only to myself, but to them that I can do it”. They also demonstrate adaptability, being able to switch topics easily, quickly adapt to challenges, and work in various situations as long as they are passionate about the mission. In terms of self-awareness, Entrepreneurs with ADHD have developed a high level of self-awareness through reflection; “Hours, what do I say, days of reflection”, especially after receiving their ADHD diagnosis. Or after instances of being told that you did something wrong but do not understand why. Self-reflection leads to understanding what works for the individual and a willingness to improve and enhance themselves through self-education: “It’s there, I can feel it”. On the other hand, it resulted in a tendency of “I’m not going to try to fit in anymore because they would judge me anyway” (Table 4.1).

5 Discussion

Overview

This section consecutively discusses the following topics: First, a summary of this study's key findings (Table 5.1), additional findings (Table 5.2) and the resulting theoretical model (depicted in Figure 5.3); second, this study's theoretical contributions and how they relate to prior literature (also schematically depicted in Table 5.4); third, this study's practical contributions, implications, and recommendations. Fourth, this study's limitations to internal and external validity, along with suggestions for further research; fifth, short concluding remarks.

5.1 Key Findings

Summary of Challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD

This study found various challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD, answering the Research Question: *What challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?* The challenges can be categorized into two areas: Professional Management and Personal Management.

Challenges in Professional Management

Entrepreneurs with ADHD struggle with repetitive tasks (e.g., business processes, cold sales, administrative tasks) and maintaining focus. Their inconsistency in motivation and productivity, fuelled by working without deadlines and/or excitement/meaning, can be challenging in a professional setting. While they can work tirelessly when passionate about a project, this can lead to tunnel vision and an inability to understand customer demand. Money may take a backseat to passion, but financial responsibility is still important for business success. Executive dysfunction can cause difficulty in prioritizing tasks and sticking to a vision. When Entrepreneurs with ADHD find it hard to complete a task, they often switch to something else to avoid dwelling on it. With a lot of things on their mind, their ability to think broadly and creatively is hindered by the difficulty in maintaining an overview and forgetfulness. It may impair effective communication of the business plan; balancing energy and managing short-term focus is, therefore, a challenge, as is finding a way to handle taking on too much.

Challenges in Personal Management

Entrepreneurs with ADHD have a hyperactive brain. At times, they may experience complete executive dysfunction and be unable to do anything, other times, they are enthusiastic about many things but struggle to choose ideas. They also have difficulty remembering small tasks and retaining information if not taught in an engaging way. They may struggle with the fear of making mistakes, leading to perfectionism and difficulty in completing tasks. This can make them feel stuck before even starting. Additionally, ADHD can lead to mental health issues later in life. They may occasionally feel mentally overwhelmed and may be prone to addiction as a way to cope. They often struggle with low self-confidence due to always being told off and facing many difficulties in life. This can also lead to imposter syndrome. Additionally, comparing themselves to neurotypical individuals and feeling inadequate for not being able to do "normal" things can be a source of struggle.

Entrepreneurs with ADHD often work with a strong passion and drive, focusing on their mission. This can lead to over-talking and giving unwanted advice, making social interactions challenging and interrupting conversations. When they try to put their thoughts on paper, they

often struggle to write out a coherent business model. Additionally, their hyperactivity causes them to think about multiple things at once, making it difficult to finish their sentences and leading to repetitive thoughts. They may struggle to clearly explain or write down their vision and sometimes pre-emptively interpret sentences, which can lead to incorrect conclusions.

In Table 5.1, there is a short summary of the findings per area, categorized into the five overarching themes of challenges: dosing passion, having different brain functioning, executive (dis)function or productivity (with distraction as a subset), communication, and extra.

Table 5.1
Challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD per Category

Professional Management	Personal Management
Energy / Passion Management	
Being overly enthusiastic about your product	(Occasionally) overworking
Tunnel vision	Emotional regulation / dosing passion
Balancing energy	Managing energy properly
	Liking / being enthusiastic for a lot of things
Taking on too much	Difficult to follow through when initial wave of passion is over
All or nothing approach	Difficult to choose ideas / plans
	Starting a lot of things (at the same time)
Making the right spending decisions	
Different Brain Functioning / Self-Perception	
Assuming that neurotypical people think the same	Comparing to neurotypical people
Convincing neurotypical people	Feeling inadequate
Jumping from A – E in thought process	Having different thinking patters
Estimating customer demands in a product	Often not fitting in / difficult to level
Struggling with mistakes and having a strong fear of failure	Difficulty retaining information (when taught in an unengaging way)
Executive (dis)function or Productivity	
Inconsistent motivation	Difficult to follow through when initial wave of passion is over
Managing a team in dull times	Starting tasks
Working without deadlines	Being in my head a lot of the times
Getting easily distracted	Thinking about many things
Maintaining priority lists	Sticking to the planning
Starting other things to feel better	Doing everything at 60-80% instead of 100%
Performing tedious / repetitive (management) tasks that are part of the business	Not being able to do anything for long periods of time
Organizing and maintaining financial records	Seeing a lot of problems on the road
Organizational issues	Having to spend a lot of time to figure out what works for you
Compartmentalizing tasks into smaller segments	Difficulty pulling through / working with setbacks
Subset: Distraction	
Keeping an overview	Remembering small tasks
Sticking to the planning	Sensation seeking / controlling impulses / prone to addition

Managing short term focus
 Staying on the path or vision

Communication

Effective communication of vision
 Clearly articulating (all aspects) of the business model
 Difficulty following through with promises

 Writing coherent and complete sentences
 Putting your ideas into writing
 Forgetting to connect with the entire department
 Struggles with social interactions

Tendency to talk excessively
 Interrupting others while speaking
 Not finishing sentences
 Pre-emptively understanding where a conversation is going and drawing incorrect conclusions
 Wanting to impress in conversations

 Expressing thoughts clearly
 Easily becoming distracted in your mind

Extra

Working without context, goal or passion
 Problems with Authority
 Difficulty pricing your services
 Imposter Syndrome

Mental Well-Being
 Being overwhelmed
 Choosing passion over money
 Low Self-Confidence

5.2 Additional Findings

Challenge of Balancing Strengths

The research findings include more than just a list of challenges that individuals with ADHD experience in Personal and Professional Management. Some of the specific challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Table 4.1) and some specific strengths (Table 4.1) are found to be interrelated. These strengths, if not managed well, can potentially turn into challenges.

A few examples of such strengths are; a positive mindset, the ability to think about multiple things at the same time (meta overview), effective problem-solving, and high passion. A positive mindset can lead to internalizing negativity while trying to keep it away from others. Meta overview can result in communication problems and distraction. Effective problem-solving can turn into solving unwanted problems or giving unsolicited advice. High passion can lead to tunnel vision. Table 5.2 visually represents these findings, and in Figure 5.3, one of such strengths (to challenge) is discussed in detail.

Table 5.2

Strengths with the potential to turn into challenges

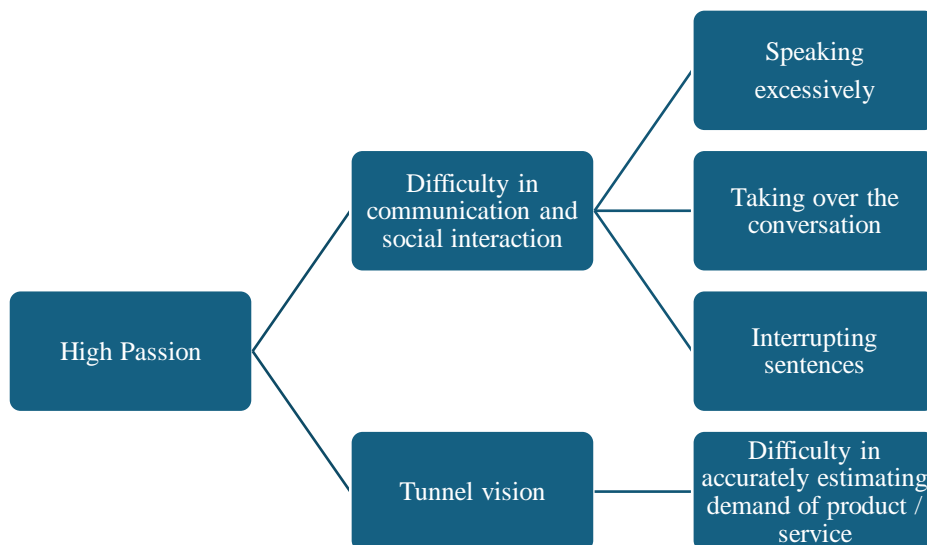
Strength		Challenge
Taking responsibility for the team	→	Taking upon too much of the work Difficulty delegating
Positive Mindset	→	Taking all the negativity in yourself
Meta Overview (“eagle eye”)	→	Not being able to keep overview
Thinking about multiple things at the same time		Forgetting things Easily distracted
Hyperactivity in the brain	→	Pre-emptively finishing other’s thoughts with a wrong conclusion Easily distracted Repetitive thoughts Already one step ahead (Difficulty explaining in a neurotypical way) Only finishing half of the sentences

Effective Problem Solving Mindset	→	→ Difficulty with articulating (writing down) the business plan Wrong/unwanted problem solving Giving unsolicited advice
High Ambition	→	Need to prove yourself Unrealistic goal setting
Orientation towards fairness	→	Offering free services Difficulty setting prices
High Empathy	→	Speaking too long / Talking excessively Taking over the conversation Interrupting conversations Tunnel vision
High Passion	→	Accurately estimate demand of product / service

To emphasize one of these unique strengths, which, if not managed well, can present challenges or even problems, let's consider the example of experiencing **high passion** and enthusiasm for an idea. High passion is undoubtedly a distinctive strength of ADHD (Hatak et al., 2021). It can even serve as a mediator between ADHD symptoms and business success (Hatak et al., 2021) and is found to possibly be one of the explaining factors why Entrepreneurs with ADHD are very motivational speakers (Table 4.3). However, if not managed well, this passion can result in speaking for too long or taking over the conversation. Furthermore, having a strong passion for an idea may result in tunnel vision. Entrepreneurs with ADHD often face the challenge that their neurotypical counterparts do not think in the same way (Table 4.5). This can make it difficult for them to accurately estimate the demand for their product. Entrepreneurs with ADHD are often unaware of these challenges, which can lead to struggles and difficulties with social interaction or networking and, in some cases, lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Figure 5.3

Detailed explanation of Strength; High Passion, turning into a Challenge



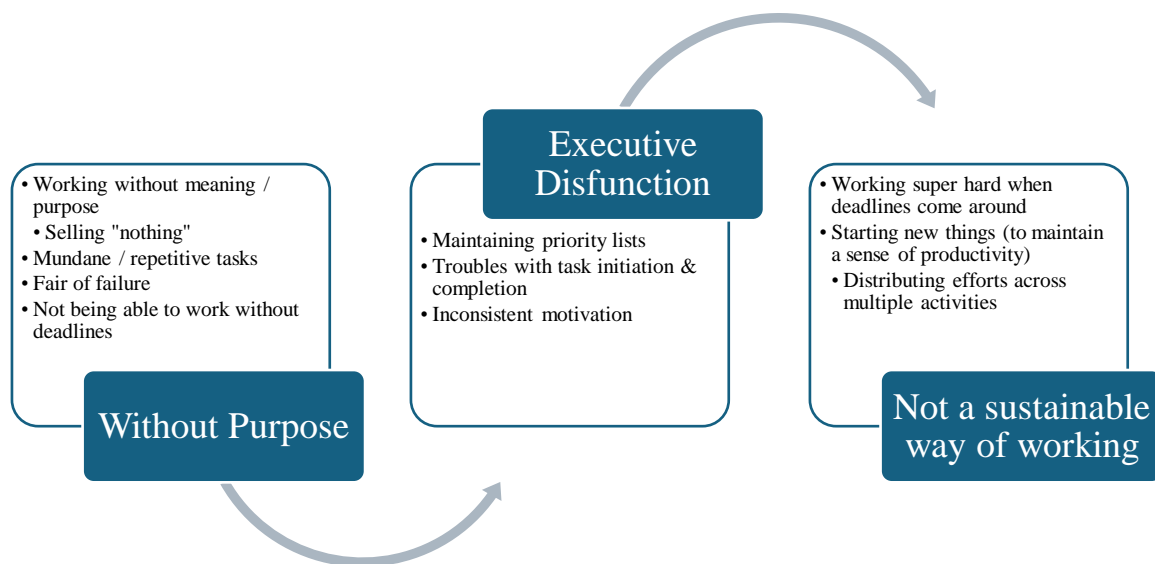
Challenges Arising from ADHD Symptoms

While most challenges arise from the entrepreneur's neurodivergency and related ADHD symptoms (otherwise, they would be general entrepreneurial problems rather than specific to

Entrepreneurs with ADHD), some distinct ADHD symptoms are worth highlighting. These specific symptoms can lead to disproportionately more difficulties for Entrepreneurs with ADHD. One pertinent example is executive dysfunction, which is frequently associated with an inability to initiate tasks (Roselló et al., 2020) and is often found to be rooted in a lack of context, absence of meaning, lack of belief in the objective, engagement in mundane tasks, or fear of failure (Table 4.1). This executive dysfunction impacts various aspects of professional and personal management, including the initiation of tasks and the consistent execution of ideas. Consequently, individuals may begin numerous activities to maintain a sense of productivity, thereby failing to complete any single task fully. Instead, they often distribute their efforts across multiple activities, achieving only 60% to 80% completion in each.

Figure 5.4

Perceived possible relationship around (Professional) Executive Dysfunction of Entrepreneurs with ADHD



Furthermore, the neurological disorder ADHD entails distinct thinking patterns (Roselló et al., 2020), often necessitating that individuals with ADHD develop problem-solving skills from a young age (Table 4.2, 4,3). Consequently, Entrepreneurs with ADHD tend to excel in problem-solving and exhibit a strong ambition to prove themselves (Table 5.2). However, this ambition can sometimes lead to unrealistic goal-setting.

Due to educational methods not catering to their brains from a young age (Table 4.2, 4,3), Entrepreneurs with ADHD often trust their intuition. This trust enables them to make rapid strategic decisions (Moore et al., 2021), which relates to their tendency for leadership (Lerner et al., 2018). Additionally, their need to adapt has made them flexible, constantly finding ways that work for them. This adaptability makes them creative problem solvers who think outside the box and develop self-reflection skills from a young age. However, this can also lead to attempting to solve too many problems at once, or giving unsolicited advice (Table 4.5).

However, due to these unique approaches to problem-solving and distinctive ways of communication (Table 4.5), Entrepreneurs with ADHD often feel like they do not fit in. This sense of being different often stems from not fitting in with the regular group and not being

understood or listened to. This may contribute to their strong sense of (social) fairness, which they all exhibit (Table 4.3). Additionally, they derive high passion from working for a mission they relate to, but this focus on passion over (monetary) gain and a strong sense of fairness (“Not wanting to tax the already taxed”) can make it difficult to price their services appropriately (9/10). Additionally, many individuals with ADHD have not been high achievers in the scholarly system or in life because everything is often twice as difficult for them (Table 4.3). When they do receive praise in the form of recognition, promotions, or financial rewards, they often don't believe it, and some even mention experiencing imposter syndrome, which also contributes to their difficulty in pricing their services.

5.3 Theoretical Contribution

In this section, the contribution of the results to academic literature is discussed, as well as their relationship to the current body of literature. All relevant literature on ADHD and entrepreneurship that forms our current understanding is mentioned in Table 2.1 (Appendix).

Additionally, literature review discussed general Entrepreneurial Challenges. As a result, it is now possible to relate the findings of this research to ‘classic’ Entrepreneurial Problems (Chapter 2.2). The distinction between Entrepreneurial Challenges for individuals with ADHD and Entrepreneurial Problems for neurotypical people is made in Table 5.5: *Research Findings vs Neurodivergent Entrepreneurial Challenges* (Appendix).

Furthermore, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) was implemented as a metric to identify the most pressing problems. The problems with a high self-attributed impact on ESE are delineated in Table 5.6: *Entrepreneurial Challenges with a High (self-attributed) Impact on ESE* (Appendix). This effectively leaves the following list (Table 5.7) of the most pressing Challenges for Entrepreneurs with ADHD, which are part of the answer to the research question: *What Challenges do Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience?*

A Systematic Mapping of Challenges

The theoretical contribution of this paper includes a systematic and thematic mapping (Table 4.1) and an overview of the practical challenges that Entrepreneurs with ADHD experience (Table 5.5). It omits "classic" entrepreneurial problems and instead takes issues related to high self-attributed entrepreneurial self-efficacy into account.

Table 5.7

The (most pressing) challenges of Entrepreneurs with ADHD

-
- Effectively **communication** specifically in clear and concise writing
 - Writing comprehensive texts
 - Writing down the business plan
 - Explaining in a neurotypical way
 - Structuring (hyperactive) thoughts
 - **Executive functioning** and managing to-do lists effectively due to forgetfulness or being easily distracted
 - Difficulty taking the first step, avoiding procrastination, and finalizing tasks
 - Dealing effectively with day-to-day problems
-

-
- Structuring basic tasks, keeping to time, and planning/sticking to plans
 - **Dosing energy**, enthusiasm, or passion
 - Tunnel vision & Effectively pricing your product / service
 - Working without context or passion
 - Choosing between ideas and saying no to some
 - Emotional Regulation
 - Having **different brain functioning**
 - Assuming that neurotypical people think the same way
 - Difficulty retaining information/learning information with neurotypical methods
 - Significant time spent in understanding your brain
 - **Extra**
 - Fighting against ADHD and struggling to accept it
 - Explaining to people what ADHD means
 - Everything is/feels twice as difficult compared to others.
 - Balancing financial stability with entrepreneurial freedom
 - Organizing and maintaining financial records including the creation of invoices
 - Relatively low Entrepreneurial Self Confidence
 - Feelings of inadequacy
 - Difficulty pricing own products or services
 - Afraid to make mistakes (especially on the “easy” tasks)
 - Overcoming Imposter Syndrome
 - Considering strategic partnerships / connections
-

Relation to existing literature

This study is in line with ADHD having a link with higher levels of entrepreneurial orientation through impulsivity and hyperactivity (Verheul et al., 2015, 2016) and aligns with the result that ADHD symptoms enhance creativity but may impair consistent business management (Verheul et al., 2016; Lerner et al., 2019; Rajah et al., 2021). This study found that the specific business management challenges are repetitive or mundane tasks, cold sales, or (financial) administration. This alignment also counts for the role of emotional resilience in Entrepreneurs with ADHD, and its link to business success (Wiklund et al., 2017). Contributing to this, the results found that emotional dysregulation associated with ADHD is a challenge, as it can impair strategic business practices and effective communication (Table 4.1).

ADHD strengths such as high enthusiasm might lead to entrepreneurial success when managed well (Wiklund et al., 2018); however, this study also found that this enthusiasm might become impairing in combination with effective communication and estimating customer demand (Table 5.2). Additionally, ADHD can contribute positively to rapid decision-making and opportunity recognition (Lerner et al., 2018), explaining their tendency for leadership in high emotional situations (Lerner et al., 2018), but there are challenges in managing business practices when the initial excitement dies down (Table 4.5). These challenges with Executive functioning are known challenges of ADHD (Roselló et al., 2020), and this study has highlighted that this ADHD symptom also translates into challenges in Entrepreneurship.

Where entrepreneurial passion serves as a mediator between ADHD symptoms and business success (Hatak et al., 2021), it can also lead to tunnel vision and difficulty pricing your products (Table 4.1). Additionally, ADHD might weaken the link between ESE and Entrepreneurial Intention (Wismans et al., 2020), but Entrepreneurs with ADHD camp with a general challenge of ESE (Table 4.1) in line with Tucker et al. (2021). Furthermore, individuals with ADHD are more likely to make risky decisions (Greidanus & Liao, 2021; Shirokova et al., 2022), but these risky decisions can also come out in business processes (i.e., excessive (spending) decisions and lack of premeditation) (Table 4.1).

An additional contribution to the existing body of literature is the exploration and theorization of the relationship between the entrepreneurial strengths of Entrepreneurs with ADHD and the challenges they face (Table 5.2). This is a novel contribution, as no specific paper has previously addressed this. Previous academic literature has always made a distinction between positive and negative aspects. While the behavioral characteristics of ADHD are categorized as a spectrum rather than a binary condition (Sedgwick et al., 2019), the challenges have not been specifically explored in this context. However, previous studies by Hatak et al., (2021) and Shirokova et al., (2022) have indicated that specific ADHD symptoms can mediate business success. Since these strengths are also ADHD symptoms, our proposed relationship is in line with that research.

5.4 Practical Contribution

The findings of this paper will serve as a foundation for future research and will offer practical insights into a range of entrepreneurial challenges. This can be beneficial for Entrepreneurs with ADHD and other stakeholders in the field (e.g., educational institutions and organizations promoting neurodiversity). By classifying the difficulties encountered by ADHD entrepreneurs into Professional Management and Personal Management, the study offers a systematic understanding of challenges that can help shape individual problem statements and practical interventions to empower Entrepreneurs with ADHD.

For Entrepreneurs with ADHD, this paper raises awareness of the challenges they may face, aiding them in identifying their own problem statements. Every entrepreneur is different, and they will need to find, perhaps with the support of a partner, the specific challenges they experience through self-reflection and this research, to create solutions and leverage their entrepreneurial potential.

For educational institutions, this paper offers a foundation for understanding the problems faced by Entrepreneurs with ADHD. This understanding can inform the creation of tailored entrepreneurial education and support programs. These programs should focus on enhancing executive functioning, building structure, understanding ADHD, emotional regulation in business (e.g., managing passion, energy, and enthusiasm), increasing entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), and developing effective communication skills. Given the mental health challenges identified, such as fear of failure, imposter syndrome, emotional dysregulation, and lower self-esteem, it is important for training programs to incorporate mental health support.

For organizations promoting neurodiversity, this paper contributes to an enhanced understanding of Entrepreneurship & ADHD, hopefully paving the way to leverage the strengths of neurodiverse individuals and navigate their weaknesses effectively. It also highlights the need to establish effective support systems that recognize and accommodate their specific challenges.

For employers, although this study focuses on entrepreneurship, it reveals the general challenges that Entrepreneurs with ADHD face in building structure and executive functioning. Employers can create environments where individuals with ADHD can fully leverage their potential and enhance productivity by combining structure and flexibility, allowing for creative freedom within inherent deadlines.

5.5 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged in accordance with the criteria established by Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Guba & Lincoln (1994), which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility: One major challenge was the clarity of responses from participants with ADHD, which often required significant interpretation and editing for coherence.

Transferability: The variety of industries, companies, and differing years of experience among participants mean that the findings cannot be easily generalized. While the sample size quickly reached saturation, a more extensive study with individual case studies would have been ideal. A more structured approach with set parameters, such as including specific groups (e.g., 5 individuals with ADD, 5 with ADHD, 5 newly diagnosed, 5 recently diagnosed, 5 successful, and 5 unsuccessful entrepreneurs), could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies of ADHD entrepreneurs per group/case.

Dependability: The study does not capture the full truth, as the self-reported data can only be subjective. Every individual is different, with unique experiences and challenges. This variability can lead to inconsistencies and a lack of reliability across different contexts and participants. To enhance dependability, future research should implement a more structured approach that includes detailed documentation (audit trail) and a bigger sample size.

Confirmability: Ensuring objectivity in this study was challenging due to the inherent subjectivity in self-reported data. The data's self-descriptive nature makes it susceptible to personal biases, as individuals may perceive and report their experiences subjectively.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

Besides addressing the limitations of this study (such as including a larger and more diverse sample and conducting comparative studies), future research should focus on how education can better support Entrepreneurs with ADHD and neurodiversity in general. This includes how educational systems can implement adaptive learning methods from a young age and promote lifelong learning to accommodate students with ADHD. Specifically, research should explore the use of accountability buddies and the impact of role models in entrepreneurial settings. Building on Moore's work on passion in the entrepreneurial mindset (Moore et al., 2021), it would be valuable to explore the best methods for ADHD individuals to compartmentalize their ideas and tasks and effectively choose between them: How can they develop strategies for lasting fulfillment? Additionally, studies should examine the optimal team size for neurodivergent and neurotypical groups and whether collaboration with other neurodivergent individuals enhances productivity and innovation. Investigating the distinction between good leadership and poor management skills in Entrepreneurs with ADHD/neurodivergence might

shed light on their ideal work environment. Finally, exploring whether individuals with ADHD tend to be more fair and if this trait stems from often being left out or feeling different in their youth could provide deeper insights into their social interactions and ethical behavior.

5.7 Concluding remarks

The research has highlighted significant obstacles in Professional and Personal management for individuals with ADHD, particularly in areas such as communication, task initiation and completion, organization, energy management, productivity, financial management, psychological well-being, learning, and strategic decision-making. They also contend with being quickly distracted and having different brain functioning. These challenges are structured into four key areas:

Communication: Entrepreneurs with ADHD often struggle with effective communication, especially in writing. Possible causes for this include hyperactivity in the brain, forgetfulness, and high levels of energy, passion, or enthusiasm. Participants noted that their thought processes differ from those of neurotypical individuals, often skipping steps (e.g., jumping from A to E), which can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in accurately conveying ideas to team members and stakeholders.

Executive Functioning: Managing daily tasks effectively is a common challenge due to tendencies toward distraction, fluctuating passion, and forgetfulness. These issues often lead to irregular motivation and productivity, making it difficult to follow through on planned activities.

Self-Perception: Entrepreneurs with ADHD often struggle to accept their condition and explain their experiences to neurotypical individuals. They tend to fight against their differences and perceive tasks as more challenging compared to others, contributing to a general lack of confidence. This lower entrepreneurial self-efficacy, fueled by past experiences of not fitting in and thinking differently, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome. As a result, ADHD entrepreneurs may find it harder to confidently manage their businesses, assert their capabilities, and set their prices.

Effectively Balancing ADHD Strengths: While Entrepreneurs with ADHD possess specific strengths such as a positive mindset, the ability to think about multiple things simultaneously (meta overview), effective problem-solving, and high passion, these strengths can also become challenges if not managed well. For instance, a positive mindset can lead to internalizing negativity, meta overview can result in communication problems and distraction, problem-solving can turn into solving unwanted problems or giving unsolicited advice, and high passion can lead to tunnel vision.

Understanding these challenges will form a basis for understanding future research and can contribute to developing strategies that can help Entrepreneurs with ADHD succeed through tailored support and educational interventions. Additionally, a key contribution of this study is the rich array of best practices shared by 10 Entrepreneurs with ADHD, systematically presented in the Epilogue (Chapter 6). These insights provide valuable recommendations for other Entrepreneurs with ADHD currently experiencing similar challenges.

Future research on balancing entrepreneurial strengths and mitigating problems for Entrepreneurs with ADHD should continue, with a particular focus on how education can better

support Entrepreneurs with ADHD and neurodiversity in general. This includes implementing adaptive learning methods from a young age and promoting lifelong learning. Further studies should investigate the long-term impact of these tailored educational strategies and how they influence entrepreneurial outcomes. Innovative solutions are needed to cater to the approximately 10% of the world's population with neurodivergent brains and maximize their productivity.

This study provides valuable insights into the entrepreneurial journey of individuals with ADHD. It emphasizes the importance of understanding their challenges, as well as recognizing their strengths, as the first step in optimizing their advantages and minimizing the negative effects of their ADHD symptoms. Building on this research, our goal is to create a supportive entrepreneurial environment that maximizes the productivity and success of neurodiverse individuals, because there is so much to gain.

6 Epilogue

Most of the Entrepreneurs with ADHD interviewed have faced a lifetime of struggles and were happy to share their best practices. In this epilogue, the Best Practices of Entrepreneurs with ADHD are reviewed and related to the findings of this study. This review follows the across-case analysis, the analysis of the subsequent Data Table (Table 6.1), and the summarizing Table 6.2, *Best Tips (Categorized) from Entrepreneurs with ADHD* (Appendix). These insights will form my recommendations for Entrepreneurs with ADHD who are currently experiencing challenges in personal and/or professional management and communication.

6.1 Results & Data Table

Table 6.1

Summary of Best Practices of Entrepreneurs with ADHD

Aggregate dimension	2 nd Order Code	1 st order Codes	Supporting Quotations from data			
Personal	Way of working	Find your method	“Try various methods and see what works” #5 “Utilize adaptive learning methods available” #5 “Devide time to figuring out your learning strategy” #10			
		Knowledge	“Invest in knowledge about your brain” #6			
		Workaround	“Create your own workarounds” #7			
		Failure	“Accept failure” #2 “Stay patient with oneself” #5			
	The WHY	Strategies	“Write down strategies to streamline goals in life” #10			
		Purpose	“Find the bigger purpose” #10			
		Support	“Create a supportive environment” #2			
	Professional	Work Place	Work Place	“Find a place where they let you be creative” #1 “Work at a place where they provide free training” #8		
			Team Building	“Build a team that understands ADHD” #1 “Foster emotional understanding with team members” #10 “Focus on complementary team that can fill in your weak spots” #8 “Foster emotional understanding with team members” #10		
Role Models			“Surround yourself with role models” #9			
Group Deadlines			“Work in a group / team and utilize the inherent deadlines”			
Way of working			Networking	“Research others before conversations” #4		
		Measurable		“Make everything measurable” #5 “Make your tasks so that you can easily tick them off” #6 “Quantify aspects of tasks” #4 "I make everything smart. Extremely measurable in time. And I also put them in my agenda. And... In that way I also pushed myself into a structure. I only have to do what's on my agenda."		
				“Utilize your spur of energy” [Figure out when you’re most productive. Plan no meetings or mails, and just work during that time.] #4		
			Concrete tips	Templates	Create Templates	“Create strategic desings for improved client communication” #8
					Excel	“Create comprehensive excel sheets for your tasks per category” #5
					Feedback	“Constructively write down all your feedback” #6 “proactively tackle challenges” #4 “Find enjoyment in your own analysis” #5
Quantifiable		Strucutre	Push yourself into structure” #10			
		Pricing	“Let the market set your price” #7 Rule: “No more free services” #2			
		To Do lists	“Put everything into to do lists that you can tick off” #6			
		Celebrate targets	“Set very specific targets, and celebrate them” #6			

	THE WHY	Align business goals	“Align business goals with social justice, so you always work for a higher purpose – you can fall back on that when you experience problems with motivation” #2
	What works for you?	Work towards your capabilities	“Avoid / outsource tasks that don’t align with ADHD tendencies” #1
		Communicate with others	“Discuss challenges with others (preferably people not close to you)” #2
		Mentor	“Find a good mentor” #9
		ChatGPT	“Utilize ChatGPT for easy tasks” #7
		Determine worth	“Analyze business relationships and their emotional impact” (not worth it, ditch it) #10
		Accountability partner	“Find an accountability partner for guidance (similar field for work, and different field for personal)” #2 “I work best with the possibility of others looking” #6
	Visualization	Pre made whiteboard	“Use a pre made whiteboard with explaining” #9 “Always visualize things when explaining things” #7
		Mindmapping	“Mindmapping to get your thoughts clear” #9
	Self Care	Meds	“Consult someone on how to take your meds that work best for you” #1
		Sports	“Gym” #1, #4, #7 “Swimming” #7 “Walk (outside)” #3, #10 “Healthy diet” #7
		Social Media	“Reduce Social Media use” #1 “Take Social Media Breaks” #3
		Reading	“Read more” #1
		Journalling	“Get thoughts out of your head” #5 “Park your thoughts” #7

(1) Personal

When striving for personal development, it’s important to explore your way of working. “Try various methods” and “identify what works best for you”. “Utilize adaptive learning techniques” and take the time to “devise a personalized learning strategy”. Invest in understanding how your brain functions to optimize your learning potential. “Embrace [the concept of] failure” as a stepping stone to success, and “be patient with yourself” throughout the learning journey. Additionally, individuals with ADHD work best when they work for something bigger – and can get into emotional hyperarousement (Brown, 2024). It’s crucial to “set achievable goals” and establish strategies to “streamline your path” towards them. By finding a higher purpose (WHY) and creating a supportive environment for yourself, you can pave the way for continuous growth and improvement.

(2) Professional

To maximize productivity and work effectively, it’s important to find a workplace that “fosters creativity” and even better: offers (free) training. If you are an entrepreneur, invest in training for yourself and your brain with ADHD. Additionally, “building a team that understands ADHD” and “fostering emotional understanding” among team members can create a supportive and inclusive work environment where you can be creative and work on your strengths instead of being busy with tedious tasks. “Surrounding yourself with role models” and working in a “complementary team” can help fill in your weak spots. Making “tasks measurable”, “easily achievable”, and “quantifying aspects of tasks” can aid in tracking

progress. Additionally, “working during your most productive hours” without meetings or emails can optimize efficiency and output.

(3) Concrete tips

Additionally, the entrepreneurs have suggested some very concrete tips that work for them. Firstly, it’s about “maintaining systematic work” and “learning from your previous mistakes”. “Create templates of strategic designs to improve repetitive processes or client communication”. Also, use “bullet-pointed lists” or create “comprehensive Excel sheets for all your to-dos or tasks per category to keep an overview”. “Set very specific targets and celebrate them.” As your brain works differently, you probably have to self-reflect a lot. “Find enjoyment in your analysis” and “proactively tackle your triggers/challenges”. In this analysis, you can also: “analyze business relationships and their emotional impact”: If something is “not worth it, ditch it”. “Push yourself into a structure” where you can, and “consult someone on how to take your meds that work best for you”. Another common challenge is pricing strategies. First of all, implement the “rule of no more free services”. Additionally, “let the market set your price”. If you have difficulties, find an “accountability partner” for guidance (similar field for work, and different field for personal) – this way you can “discuss your challenges with others and learn from them”. A mentor also works. Additionally, “avoid/outsource tasks that don’t align with ADHD tendencies” and “utilize ChatGPT for easy tasks.” When explaining things, always “visualize”, and “use a pre-made whiteboard or make a mind map”. Additionally, the world is constantly changing. “Engage in lifelong learning”, and when you’ve found a good spot for yourself personally, “Advocate for your kids [for education to accommodate neurodivergence]” or for others with neurodivergence and a more accepting world”.

Lastly, it is advised to engage in activities to manage your dopamine. This can include going to the gym, playing sports, swimming, taking walks outside, as well as taking social media breaks, following a healthy diet, writing down your problems, and organizing your thoughts.

6.2 Discussion: Best Practices of Entrepreneurs with ADHD

The best practices identified by Entrepreneurs with ADHD address several prominent challenges that are often still unresolved. One significant issue is executive dysfunction (Table 4.6), which includes difficulties with extreme procrastination and task completion (Roselló et al., 2020). To combat this, the entrepreneurs recommend building a *supportive team that relies on minimal meetings but frequent check-ins and a strong adherence to deadlines*. Introducing an *accountability buddy* who can keep you on track and review decisions is another effective strategy. This person, even without a direct stake in your work, can provide valuable feedback when you are highly passionate about an idea and need help with making decisions, having a (neurotypical/neurodivergent) view, or keeping you on track and making sure you finish your tasks.

Another common strength among Entrepreneurs with ADHD is their strategic meta-view, which is particularly useful in small startups where a comprehensive overview is necessary. However, this can lead to mental hyperactivity, being easily distracted, and forgetfulness. Entrepreneurs recommend simplifying tasks and avoiding overcomplicating things. *Focusing on key areas of the business without spreading oneself too thin* can prevent forgetting important details. Entrepreneurs advise creating a *structured approach* – even though this is often difficult, especially for recurring issues - and using *self-reflection not just for analysis but for actionable improvements* (potentially with a mentor).

Passion (often shown by high enthusiasm) is another common denominator among Entrepreneurs with ADHD. Without passion, individuals are prone to executive dysfunction and difficulty retaining information. However, too much passion can lead to an unbalanced professional lifestyle. *Maintaining balance* is crucial, and having an *accountability buddy* or a *supportive partner* can help. Findings of this research indicate that successful Entrepreneurs with ADHD (Business +5 years), have strong home environments with partners who understand and support them.

Many Entrepreneurs with ADHD find it difficult to write clearly and concisely, though speaking might be easier. To address this, they recommend visualizing thoughts and working with complementary team members who can fill in gaps. Having *someone to write things down*, and using tools like *AI bots* to translate spoken words into coherent text, can significantly enhance communication. Effective communication also depends on timing, and *research* or a mentor/buddy can help determine the optimal amount of speaking to have an impactful pitch.

Understanding how your brain works differently is essential, and a general tip is to invest time and money in learning about it. Many Entrepreneurs with ADHD have faced criticism throughout their lives for their different ways of thinking and communicating, often leading to feelings of inadequacy and low entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This is still a difficult challenge, and no real comprehensive tips have been given. While the accountability buddy might also help with this and give a reality check, it is important here to work out what works for you. This might be *balancing dopamine levels* through medication, coaching, or even cold showers. Or *engaging in adaptive learning methods*. Creating a *"what works for me"* document and sharing it with your managers or team can help them understand how to best support you. Additionally, *accepting failure* and *staying patient* with yourself is crucial. *Writing down strategies to streamline goals in both business and personal life* helps maintain focus on your mission. Finding a bigger purpose and creating a supportive environment can further enhance your entrepreneurial journey.

Focusing on your strengths is crucial, and sometimes, this means *accepting your limitations*. While you might not be suited for managerial roles that require routine tasks, consistent oversight, and detailed administrative work, you can excel as a leader. Entrepreneurs with ADHD thrive in roles that require creativity, connection, persuasion, and the generation of new ideas. They are adept at making quick decisions and taking the lead in high-stakes situations. When tasks become more mundane, it may be more effective to *delegate* them to neurotypical team members who are better suited for such responsibilities.

In general, Entrepreneurs with ADHD have a common story: By embracing your unique ADHD abilities and understanding your limitations, you can position yourself to succeed as an entrepreneur with ADHD. Focus on leveraging your creativity and leadership skills while building a team that complements your strengths and supports areas where you may struggle. If you work in a regular wage job, consider finding a place where you can be creative, and that provides free training to engage in lifelong learning. Lastly, an important metric is self-care in the form of physical activity, taking social media breaks, journaling, and self-reflection, which are all important tips from Entrepreneurs with ADHD on how to navigate (and thrive in) Neurodiversity and Entrepreneurship.

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Appendix

Chapter 2

Table 2.1

Our understanding of Entrepreneurship & ADHD

References	Specificity	Dimensionality	Sample	Key Findings
Verheul et al., 2015	Entrepreneurial behavior and ADHD	Personality traits and business outcomes	Entrepreneurs in the Netherlands	- ADHD traits linked with higher levels of entrepreneurial intention and startup activities.- Demonstrated that impulsivity and hyperactivity are predictors of entrepreneurial inclination - Discussed the adaptive roles these traits can play in managing the uncertainties of entrepreneurial endeavors.
Verheul et al., 2016	ADHD symptoms among entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance	Dutch entrepreneurs	- Analyzed the impact of ADHD symptoms on the strategic orientation and performance of SMEs. - Found that ADHD symptoms can enhance creativity but may impair consistent business management.- Suggested that the benefits and drawbacks of ADHD symptoms vary widely depending on business context and support structures.
Wiklund et al., 2017 & (AoMProc, 2019)	Entrepreneurship as emotion management	ADHD, emotional stability, and resilience	Swedish entrepreneurs	- Emphasized the role of emotional resilience in Entrepreneurs with ADHD, linking it to business success. - Showed that emotional dysregulation associated with ADHD can be mitigated through strategic business practices.- Suggested that successful Entrepreneurs with ADHD often develop personalized strategies to handle emotional instability.
Wiklund et al., 2018	Mental health challenges in entrepreneurship	Intersection of psychiatric conditions and business creation	Cross-sectional study	- Highlighted the entrepreneurial potential of individuals with mental health challenges including ADHD.- Proposed that the high-risk, high-reward nature of entrepreneurship might attract individuals with ADHD. - Indicated that ADHD-related traits such as high energy and risk tolerance can lead to entrepreneurial success under the right conditions.
Lerner, D., Hunt, R., & Verheul, I. (2018)	ADHD and entrepreneurial action	Cognitive functioning and decision-making	International sample	- Explored the cognitive and behavioral dynamics of Entrepreneurs with ADHD. - Noted that ADHD can contribute positively to rapid decision-making and opportunity recognition.- Argued that ADHD-associated cognitive flexibility can foster innovative business practices.
Lerner et al., 2019	Entrepreneurial behavior and neurological foundations	Neurological studies on entrepreneurship	Review of literature	- Reviewed neurological evidence suggesting a link between brain function and entrepreneurial tendencies in ADHD.- Discussed how ADHD-related neural patterns can enhance creativity and persistence.- Suggested that ADHD traits might predispose individuals toward entrepreneurial activities due to unique brain functioning.
Hatak, I., Chang, M., Harms, R., & Wiklund, J. (2021)	ADHD symptoms, entrepreneurial passion, and performance	Relationship between ADHD symptoms and entrepreneurial success	Entrepreneurs with ADHD	- Demonstrated a positive correlation between ADHD symptoms and successful entrepreneurial performance.- Found that entrepreneurial passion serves as a mediator between ADHD symptoms and business success. - Suggested that the impulsivity associated with ADHD can lead to rapid action and advantage in opportunity-rich environments.
Wismans et al. (AP, 2020)	ADHD and entrepreneurial self-efficacy	Entrepreneurial intentions and risk-taking behavior	University students	- ADHD symptoms might weaken the link between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. - UPPS impulsivity traits influence entrepreneurial behavior among university students. -

Yu et al. (ETP, 2021)	ADHD Symptoms and Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)	Firm performance	Entrepreneurs	Highlighted the complex relationship between ADHD symptoms and entrepreneurial outcomes. - Entrepreneurs with impulsive and hyperactive symptoms of ADHD may experience greater firm performance through EO. - EO focuses on innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking. - Inattention symptoms do not show the same positive impact on performance. - Individuals exhibiting ADHD-like behavior are more likely to undertake risky decisions. - Those displaying risk-taking behavior are more likely to become entrepreneurs. - Highlights the link between ADHD symptoms and entrepreneurial intentions.
Greidanus & Liao (JBV, 2021)	ADHD symptoms and risk-taking	ADHD entrepreneurial behavior	and Cross-sectional study	- Individuals with ADHD are more likely to not just espouse entrepreneurial intentions but also to initiate business venturing. - Indicates a positive connection between clinical ADHD and entrepreneurial action. - negative relationship between ADHD symptoms and ESE - Highlights the impact of ADHD symptoms on entrepreneurial activities.
Tucker et al. (JBVi, 2021)	ADHD symptoms and entrepreneurial success	ADHD-like behavior and business outcomes	and Entrepreneurs	- Reviewed neurological evidence suggesting a link between brain function and entrepreneurial tendencies in ADHD. - Discussed how ADHD-related neural patterns can enhance creativity and persistence. - Suggested that ADHD traits might predispose individuals toward entrepreneurial activities.
Rajah et al. (JBV, 2021)	ADHD neurological studies	and Brain function and entrepreneurial tendencies	and Review literature of	- Individuals who exhibit behavior associated with ADHD are more likely to have entrepreneurial intentions. - Risk-taking propensity partially mediates this effect. - Highlights the role of ADHD traits in entrepreneurial intention and behavior.
Shirokova et al. (JBVi, 2022)	ADHD and entrepreneurial behavior	Risk-taking propensity and entrepreneurial intentions	and Entrepreneurs	

Table 2.2

Entrepreneurship throughout the years

Theorist	Year	Definition
Jean-Baptiste Say	1803	An entrepreneur is a person who shifts economic resources to areas of higher productivity and yield.
Joseph Schumpeter	1934	Entrepreneurs are innovators who use "creative destruction" to introduce new products and technologies.
Frank H. Knight	1921	True entrepreneurs are those who take on uncertainty, distinguishing it from calculable risks.
Israel Kirzner	1973	Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering opportunities in the market and acting upon them.
Peter Drucker	1985	Entrepreneurship involves starting new ventures or creating new value within existing businesses.
Robert D. Hisrich	1990	Entrepreneurship is the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.
R.F. Hébert & A.N. Link	1989	Entrepreneurs are individuals who specialize in taking responsibility for and making judgmental decisions that affect the location, form, and the use of goods, resources, or institutions.

Table 2.3

The developing definition of Entrepreneurship

Reference	Title	Key word	Key Findings
Croci, 2016	The Interdisciplinary Nature of Entrepreneurship	Interdisciplinary	Defines entrepreneurship as an autonomous discipline that can operate independently and across disciplines.

Barot, 2015	Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Economic Development	Economic Development	Discusses entrepreneurship as crucial for economic success and development.
Chang et al., 2015	Art Entrepreneurship: Creativity and Economic Value	Creativity and Innovation	Explores the management processes in entrepreneurship, focusing on creativity and adaptability to create both artistic and economic value.
Hessels, 2019	Entrepreneurship and Opportunity Recognition	Opportunity Recognition	Emphasizes the role of knowledge and skills in recognizing opportunities and bringing innovation to market.
Chen et al., 2018	Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth	Sustainability for Growth	Highlights how entrepreneurship contributes to sustainable economic growth through effective management.

Table 2.4

Aspects of Entrepreneurship

Dimension	Aspect	Description	Source
Personal Traits and Skills	Innovation	Ability to come up with new ideas, products, or processes.	Drucker, P.F. (1985). <i>Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i> .
	Risk-Taking	Willingness to take calculated risks to achieve business goals.	Knight, F.H. (1921). <i>Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit</i> .
	Proactiveness	Anticipating future needs or problems and acting in advance.	Rosado-Cubero, A., Freire-Rubio, T., & Hernández, A. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurship: What matters most</i>
	(Emotional) Resilience Vision	Capacity to recover from setbacks and continue pushing forward. Having a clear vision and setting concrete goals.	Shepherd, D.A. (2004). <i>Academy of Management Review</i> . Baum, J.R., Locke, E.A., & Kirkpatrick, S.A. (1998). <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> .
Business and Strategic Skills	Opportunity Recognition	Identifying and evaluating potential business opportunities.	Rosado-Cubero, A., Freire-Rubio, T., & Hernández, A. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurship: What matters most</i>
	Resource Management Networking	Effective management of time, money, and human capital. Building and maintaining a network of contacts.	Stevenson, H.H., & Jarillo, J.C. (1990). <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> . Aldrich, H., & Zimmer, C. (1986). <i>Population perspectives on organizations</i> .
	Financial Understanding	Understanding financial statements, budgeting, and financial planning.	Kerr, W.R., & Nanda, R. (2011). <i>Handbook of Research on Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i>
	Marketing and Sales (International) Project Management	Promoting and selling products or services effectively. Planning, executing, and overseeing projects. Adapting the style of management to company and domestic culture.	Kotler, P., & Keller, K.L. (2012). <i>Marketing Management</i> . Pleitner, H. J. (2011). <i>Globalization and entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs facing the ultimate challenge</i> Kerzner, H. (2017). <i>Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling</i> .
Operational Skills	Adaptability	Adjusting strategies and operations in response to changes.	Daraojimba, H., Abioye, K. M., & Bakare, A. (2023). <i>Technology and innovation to growth of entrepreneurship and financial boost: A decade in review</i> Pleitner, H. J. (2011). <i>Globalization and entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs facing the ultimate challenge</i>
	Customer Focus Leadership	Understanding and meeting the needs of customers. Leading and motivating a team, delegating tasks effectively.	Drucker, P.F. (1954). <i>The Practice of Management</i> . Yukl, G. (2013). <i>Leadership in Organizations</i> .
	Technology adaptation	Adapting to emerging technologies	Daraojimba, H., Abioye, K. M., & Bakare, A. (2023). <i>Technology and</i>

Strategic Planning	Business Planning	Developing a comprehensive business plan.	<p><i>innovation to growth of entrepreneurship and financial boost: A decade in review</i> Sahlman, W.A. (1997). <i>How to Write a Great Business Plan</i>.</p> <p>Mintzberg, H. (1994). <i>The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning</i>.</p>
	Strategic Thinking	Long-term planning and thinking about the overall direction of the business.	
Legal and Ethical Considerations	Compliance	Ensuring adherence to laws and regulations.	<p>Blind, K. (2012). <i>The influence of regulations on innovation: A quantitative assessment for OECD countries</i>.</p> <p>Pleitner, H. J. (2011). <i>Globalization and entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurs facing the ultimate challenge</i></p>
	Ethical Practices	Conducting business ethically following the country's regulations	
Continuous Learning and Improvement	Lifelong Learning	Continuously seeking new knowledge and skills.	<p>Shen, Y., Wang, Q., Hua, D., & Zhang, Z. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurial learning, self-efficacy, and firm performance: Exploring moderating effect of entrepreneurial orientation</i></p> <p>Blind, K. (2012). <i>The influence of regulations on innovation: A quantitative assessment for OECD countries</i>.</p>
	Innovation Management	Implementing processes to encourage and manage innovation.	
Personal Balance	Work-Life Balance	Maintaining a balance between work and personal life.	<p>Drucker, P.F. (1985). <i>Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i>.</p> <p>Greenhaus, J.H., Collins, K.M., & Shaw, J.D. (2003). <i>Academy of Management Review</i>.</p>
	Self-Reflection	Regularly reflecting on personal and business performance.	
	Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy	ESE is crucial for maximizing the benefits of entrepreneurial learning on performance	
Social Impact	Social Responsibility	Contributing to the community and addressing social issues.	<p>Schön, D.A. (1983). <i>The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action</i>.</p> <p>Shen, Y., Wang, Q., Hua, D., & Zhang, Z. (2022). <i>Entrepreneurial learning, self-efficacy, and firm performance: Exploring moderating effect of entrepreneurial orientation</i></p>
	Social Impact / creating a legacy	Building a business with lasting impact.	
			<p>Porter, M.E., & Kramer, M.R. (2006). <i>Harvard Business Review</i>.</p> <p>Collins, J. (2001). <i>Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't</i>.</p>

Table 2.5

Potential Challenges of Various Aspects of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial Aspect	Potential Challenge
Risk-Taking	Willingness to take calculated risks to achieve business goals.
Proactiveness	Anticipating future needs or problems and acting in advance.
Opportunity Recognition	Identifying and evaluating potential business opportunities.
Resource Management	Effective management of time, money, and human capital.
Networking	Building and maintaining a network of contacts.
Adaptability	Adjusting strategies and operations in response to changes.
Customer Focus	Understanding and meeting the needs of customers.
Leadership	Leading and motivating a team, delegating tasks effectively.
Lifelong Learning	Continuously seeking new knowledge and skills.
Innovation Management	Implementing processes to encourage and manage innovation.
Work-Life Balance	Maintaining a balance between work and personal life.
Self-Reflection	Regularly reflecting on personal and business performance.
Social Responsibility	Contributing to the community and addressing social issues.
Social Impact / creating a legacy	Building a business with lasting impact.

Table 2.6

Literature used for Personal Challenges of Entrepreneurs

Reference	Title	Dimensionality	Key Findings
Agarwal, S., & Lenka, U. (2015)	"Study on work-life balance of women entrepreneurs–review and research agenda"	Gender-Specific Challenges	- Women face significant challenges in work-life balance due to traditional gender roles. - Calls for more comparative studies between men and women on work-life balance. - Support systems and flexible working conditions are critical for both men and positive work life balance.
Yilmaz, E., Özdemir, G., & Oraman, Y. (2012)	"Women Entrepreneurs: Their Problems and Entrepreneurial Ideas"	Gender-Based Entrepreneurial Challenges	- Discusses specific problems faced by women entrepreneurs, such as access to finance and societal perception – Based on women unique challenges, there are several entrepreneurial ideas that can be more accessible than others → play on your strengths.
Drnovšek, M., Örtqvist, D., & Wincent, J. (2010)	"The Effectiveness of Coping Strategies Used by Entrepreneurs and Their Impact on Personal Well-being and Venture Performance"	Coping Strategies in Entrepreneurship	- Investigates the coping strategies employed by entrepreneurs - these strategies affect both the entrepreneurs' personal well-being and their business performance
Stephan, U., Rauch, A., & Hatak, I. (2023)	"Happy entrepreneurs? Everywhere? A meta-analysis of entrepreneurship and wellbeing"	Wellbeing of Entrepreneurs	- Relationship between wellbeing and venture growth is positive - Discusses the varying impacts of entrepreneurial activities on personal wellbeing, including stress and satisfaction levels.

Chapter 3

Interview Guide

Pre-Interview communication

Initial Email Dutch

Subject: Uitnodiging voor deelname aan kwalitatief onderzoek over AD(H)D en Ondernemerschap

Hi ...,

Myouska hier (dit keer via een ander email adres). Ik hoop dat alles goed gaat! Zoals je misschien weet, ben ik naast de programma-coördinator van Onbeperkt Ondernemen, ook een Masterstudent Innovatie Management aan de Erasmus Universiteit. Momenteel werk ik aan mijn **scriptie**, die zich richt op het verkennen van de *relatie tussen AD(H)D en ondernemerschap*.

Verzoek

Als (beginnende) ondernemer met AD(H)D, wil ik je **graag uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan mijn onderzoek**. Jouw ervaringen en inzichten zijn van grote waarde voor het begrijpen van hoe ADHD van invloed kan zijn op het ondernemerschap en hoe individuen met ADHD hiermee omgaan.

Jullie tijd is waardevol, en dat begrijp ik maar al te goed. Ik zal er alles aan doen om ervoor te zorgen dat de informatie die wordt verzameld ten goede zal komen aan de gehele ADHD-community. Als je het wilt, kan ik je ook op de hoogte houden van de vorderingen van mijn onderzoek.

Praktische informatie

Het interview zal naar verwachting tussen de 60 en 90 minuten duren. Naar jouw voorkeur kan dit online of in persoon. Tijdens dit gesprek zal ik vijf hoofdonderwerpen bespreken:

- Hoe ben je ondernemer geworden?
- Hoe heeft ADHD invloed gehad op jouw ondernemerschap, inclusief jouw ADHD-diagnose en symptomen?
- Hoe voel je je over jouw ondernemend zelfvertrouwen (entrepreneurial self-efficacy)?
- Welke problemen hebben de grootste invloed op jouw ondernemend zelfvertrouwen en waarom?
- Wat doe je om deze problemen te overwinnen?

Voor het interview is geen voorbereiding nodig. Ik vraag jullie wel alvast over de bovenstaande vragen na te denken. Het is mogelijk dat ik tijdens het interview jou vraag om nog een korte vragenlijst in te vullen.

Privacy

Ik wil benadrukken dat jouw deelname volledig vertrouwelijk zal zijn, en de *informatie die je deelt strikt gebruikt zal worden voor academische doeleinden*. Jouw persoonlijke gegevens zullen geanonimiseerd worden en niet worden gedeeld met derden.

Deelname

Als je geïnteresseerd bent in deelname aan dit onderzoek, kan je **reageren met een reply op deze mail**. Dan kunnen wij hopelijk een geschikte tijd voor dit interview vinden. Ik ben flexibel, en zou graag mijn interviews in de **periode 8 t/m 24 april afnemen**. Dinsdagen kan ik niet.

Mocht je nog vragen hebben over het onderzoek of over de interviewprocedure, aarzel dan niet om contact met me op te nemen. En als je nog andere ondernemers met ADHD kent die mogelijk geïnteresseerd zijn om deel te nemen aan mijn onderzoek, zou ik het zeer op prijs stellen als je mijn contactgegevens met hen zou willen delen. Het is belangrijk voor mij om een breed scala aan ervaringen te verzamelen.

Ik kijk er naar uit om jouw perspectief te horen en dank je bij voorbaat voor jouw tijd en deelname aan mijn onderzoek.

* Omdat het over academische relevantie gaat, kan ik alleen het onderzoek doen met mensen die officieel gediagnostiseerd zijn met AD(H)D. Volgens mij is dit zo voor jou. Ben je dit niet? Laat mij dat even weten!

Initial Email English

Subject: Invitation Participation in Qualitative Research about ADHD and Entrepreneurship

Hi Lano,

I hope all is well! My name is Myouska, and I am a Master's student in Innovation Management at Erasmus University. Currently, I am working on my thesis, which focuses on exploring the relationship between AD(H)D and entrepreneurship.

As an entrepreneur with AD(H)D, I would like to invite you to participate in my research. Your experiences and insights are of great value in understanding how ADHD can impact entrepreneurship and how individuals with ADHD cope with it.

I understand that your time is valuable, and I will do my utmost to ensure that the information gathered will benefit the entire ADHD community. If you wish, I can also keep you informed about the progress of my research.

The interview is expected to last between 60 and 90 minutes. According to your preference, this can be conducted online or in person. During this conversation, I will discuss five main topics:

- How did you become an entrepreneur?
- How has ADHD affected your entrepreneurship, including your ADHD diagnosis and symptoms?
- How do you feel about your entrepreneurial self-efficacy?
- Which problems have the greatest impact on your entrepreneurial self-efficacy and why?
- What do you do to overcome these problems?

No preparation is needed for the interview. However, I kindly ask you to think about the above questions in advance. It is possible that I will ask you to fill out a short questionnaire during the interview.

I want to emphasize that your participation will be completely confidential, and the information you share will strictly be used for academic purposes. Your personal data will be anonymized and will not be shared with third parties.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please reply to this email. Then hopefully, we can find a suitable time for this interview. I am flexible and would like to conduct my interviews between April 8th and 24th. I am unavailable on Tuesdays.

If you have any further questions about the research or the interview procedure, please do not hesitate to contact me. Additionally, if you know other Entrepreneurs with ADHD who might be interested in participating in my research, I would greatly appreciate it if you could share my contact information with them. It is important for me to gather a wide range of experiences.

I look forward to hearing your perspective and thank you in advance for your time and participation in my research.

Kind regards,

Confirmation of Interview Appointment Email

Subject: Confirmation of Interview Appointment

Dear ..

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing to confirm our scheduled interview appointment for [Date] at [Time] regarding the discussion on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and ADHD in entrepreneurship. Per our previous correspondence, the interview will take place via [Zoom/Teams/Skype/In Person], and I will send you the meeting link for your convenience.

Your insights and experiences are highly valued for my research, and I genuinely appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview.

Please let me know if there are any changes or adjustments needed regarding the timing or method of the interview. Additionally, if you have any questions or require further information before our meeting, feel free to email or phone me.

Attached to this email is the Informed Consent Form. You can either fill in the form, or give me a reply to this email with the following:

I,[Fill in name]....., hereby acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature, method, and purpose of the study. I understand:

- I may stop my participation at any time without giving any reason.
- Data will be handled anonymously, without traceability to my person.
- The recording will be destroyed after the Thesis trajectory is completed.

Thank you once again for your time and cooperation. I am looking forward to our discussion.

Best regards,
Myouska Zwijnenburg
Master of Innovation Management Student
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Informed Consent Form

Researcher: Myouska Zwijnenburg
Contact: 528128mz@eur.nl
Interview Duration: 60-90 minutes

Introduction:

Thank you for considering participation in this research. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges faced by Entrepreneurs with ADHD and how these challenges impact their Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE). Before you decide to participate, it's crucial to understand the details and purpose of the interview.

Course of Action during Research:

You are invited to a 1-on-1 interview where questions will focus on your personal background, entrepreneurial journey, diagnosis of ADHD, ADHD symptoms, specific problems faced in entrepreneurship due to ADHD, and the impact of these challenges on your Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy. The interview will be recorded using a voice recorder to ensure an accurate representation of your responses.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential. The interview recording will be transcribed and used for research purposes only. The transcript will be completely anonymous, with no identifiable information included. The recording will be destroyed after the successful completion of transcription.

Risks and Voluntary Participation:

There are no physical, legal, or economic risks associated with participating in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time during the interview without providing a reason.

Consent and Understanding:

I have explained the nature, method, and purpose of the study. By signing this form, you indicate that you understand and agree to participate voluntarily. You may stop your participation at any time without giving any reason. Your data will be anonymized and handled with utmost confidentiality.

Consent Statement:

I,, hereby acknowledge that I have been informed of the nature, method, and purpose of the study. I understand:

- I may stop my participation at any time without giving any reason.
- Data will be handled anonymously, without traceability to my person.
- The recording will be destroyed after the Thesis trajectory is completed.

Participant's
Name: _____
Date: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher's Consent Statement:

I, Myouska Zwijnenburg, the researcher, have explained the nature, method, and purpose of the study. I am available to address any further questions that may arise during the study.

Researcher's Signature: _____
Name: Myouska Zwijnenburg
Date: _____

Interview

Introduction

Hello, and thank you for being a part of this interview—your insights are highly valued! I'm Myouska Zwijnenburg, a Master of Innovation Management student at Erasmus University Rotterdam. My research goes into the fascinating intersection of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and nascent Entrepreneurs with ADHD. Today's conversation is centered around understanding entrepreneurial problems for Entrepreneurs with ADHD and their relationship with entrepreneurial self-efficacy. I'm eager to hear your unique opinions and perspectives on this subject. As we agreed, our discussion will last around 60 – 90 minutes. I have received your signed consent form. Please note that this meeting will be recorded. This recording is solely for my personal use, aiding transcription and analysis for my thesis. The interview is entirely confidential; your responses will be anonymized and referenced only by alias names to ensure your privacy. Any questions so far? If not, let's kickstart the interview. Remember, feel free to pause or conclude the conversation at any point.

Interview questions

Phase: Personal Background & Entrepreneurial Journey

- Can you tell me how you got to be an entrepreneur (Journey)
- Why do you prefer being an Entrepreneur over being in a regular wage job?
 - o Follow up: specific moment/experience that led you to be an entrepreneur
 - o Do you feel like being an entrepreneur is a necessity for you?
- What motivated you to take the first step in launching your business idea?

Phase: Diagnosis of ADHD and ADHD Symptoms

ASRS 6 Questions

Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
----- -----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once...					
How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have to do ...					
How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?					
When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you avoid o...					
How often do you fidget or squirm with your hands or feet when you have to si...					
How often do you feel overly active and compelled to do things, like you were...					

- When did you get diagnosed with ADHD?
 - o How did this process go?
- Is there any ADHD in your family?
- Have you ever sought professional help for your ADHD
 - o What let you to seek help for the first time

- (Courses, Psychology, or personal connections)
- What do you do to stabilize dopamine (medication?)

Phase: ADHD problems, specifically in entrepreneurship

- Walk me through the first year of setting up your business
 - Note down challenges
 - What was your biggest challenge?
- Can you describe a time when things (specifically related to the starting phase of your business) did not go as planned, and how you handled the situation?
 - What did you learn from that experience, and how have you applied it to your business?
- What are the most difficult things for you to handle in a business?
 - Would this be different if you did not have ADHD?
 - What do you often experience problems with?
 - What would you like to learn about?

Phase: ESE for nascent Entrepreneurs

- Do you believe you are a good entrepreneur?
 - Do you trust your own capabilities?
 - What does Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy (Ondernamed Zelfvertrouwen) mean to you?
- What are you very good at? What entrepreneurial aspect of your life gives you a lot of confidence?
 - What are you less good at?

Phase: Highlighted problems & its effect on individual ESE

I have compiled a list of all aspects of entrepreneurship to assist you in answering a question. Please review the list and quickly indicate whether you view each problem as a strength (0) or Weakness / Problem (7). After that, rate the impact of each problem on your Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy on a scale of 1 to 7. This is meant to take approximately 20 minutes.

Phase: Adjust & Adapt, overcoming problems

- Can you pick 3 of the aforementioned problems and tell me what you learned from these experiences?
 - What did you do to overcome this problem?
 - How have you applied this in your business?
- How do you stay motivated during challenging times in your business?
- As an entrepreneur with ADHD, do you have any best practices to overcome problems you face?

Debriefing

Lijst Bedrijfsaspecten

Searching	Strength – Problem	ESE
Start a new venture (registering & setting the first steps)		
Brainstorm new ideas		
Identify the need for a new product or service		
Design a product or service that will satisfy the customer		
Keep need from wants		
Visualize the business journey in detail		

Planning	Strength – Problem	ESE
Estimate customer demand for a new product or service		
Determine a competitive price for a new product / estimate the amount for your services		
Design an effective marketing / advertising campaign		
Define the target customer segment (Klantsegment)		
Understand and specify customer needs (Klantbehoefte)		
Conduct a thorough market and competition analysis		

Marshalling	Strength – Problem	ESE
Get others to identify with and believe my vision and plans for a new business		

Make contact with important stakeholders		
Exchange information with others clearly; write my business idea in everyday terms		
Develop the brand narrative (Merk & 'het verhaal')		
Determine the sales process and customer journey from lead to payment		
Outline the marketing strategies including digital presence (Marketing website, etc.)		

Implementing - People	Strength – Problem	ESE
Supervise employees		
Recruit and hire employees		
Delegate tasks and responsibilities to employees		
Deal effectively with day to day problems		
Inspire, encourage and motivate my employees		
Train employees		
Establish a customer follow-up system CRM (Klant-Volg-Systeem)		

Networking and Partnerships	Strength – Problem	ESE
Develop strategies for effective networking		
Consider strategic partnerships and alliances (Samenwerken)		
Evaluate the choice between being a freelancer (ZZP'er) or forming a company with employees		

Implementing - Financial	Strength – Problem	ESE
Organize and maintain the financial records of my business		
Manage the financial assets of my business		
Read and interpret financial statements		
Create a business case and break-even analysis		
Decide on administrative and invoicing systems or software (Administratie / facturatie)		
Understand and comply with relevant regulations, certifications, and potential subsidies (Regelgeving)		

Challenges Specific to ADHD Entrepreneurs	Strength – Problem	ESE
Develop strategies for staying engaged and avoiding boredom (Ondernemen zodat het blijvend energie geeft)		
Address potential issues with patience and the tendency to give up (Ongeduldig en geeft snel op)		
Manage short-term focus and the propensity to take on too much (Bezig met korte termijn, overzicht kwijt)		

Strategic Decisions and Self-Reflection	Strength – Problem	ESE
Engage in self-reflection to understand your drive and motivation (Why: Jouw drive)		
Make informed choices regarding the company's structure and business model (Keuzes maken)		

Attitude toward Venturing	Strength – Problem	
Worthless / worthwhile		
Disappointing / Regarding		
Negative/ positive		

Adapted from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00304.x>

Chapter 4

Post-Interview Analysis

Case 1; "The Networker"

The Networker, a 47-year-old entrepreneur diagnosed with ADD in his mid-twenties presents a case study highlighted by leveraging personal challenges as a catalyst for professional innovation. Despite not completing high school and facing early career barriers, he successfully transitioned into entrepreneurship to fulfill his need for creativity, control and flexibility.

The Networker's journey is marked by significant challenges stemming from ADD, such as difficulty in maintaining focus, organization, and consistent productivity. These challenges manifested in various aspects of his business operations, from inconsistent project completion to poor time management. However, his passion and resilience have played critical roles in navigating these obstacles. The structure of his ventures likely benefits from his decision to surround himself with a supportive team that compensates for his fluctuating focus and productivity.

His strengths lie in his people skills and ability to inspire and lead a team positively. Despite his short-term focus issues, he is good at finding and managing the right people, creating a motivating work environment, and maintaining a strategic overview. His approach includes using specific management systems to handle finance effectively and relying on his team's awareness and understanding of his ADD. The networker faces recurring difficulties in consistently engaging his team, managing (mundane) to-do lists, and connecting with distant team members. His entrepreneurial process is hindered by a lack of structured planning, such as writing comprehensive business plans and establishing systematic follow-up processes with customers (CRM). Furthermore, the need to balance financial stability with the freedoms of entrepreneurship continues to pose a strategic dilemma. Thing we can learn from the Networker is to leverage external advice and mentorship to fill knowledge gaps and provide guidance. Establishing structured routines and incorporating in-team deadlines. Delegating tasks outside his core competencies to team members better suited for them ensures operational efficiency. Creating a supportive team environment where team members are educated about ADD and its impact on work dynamics and avoiding tasks that do not align well with his mental focus and energy patterns.

Case 2; "The Coach"

The Coach is a 41-year-old male who has been involved in entrepreneurship for two years after feeling out of place in a regular business environment. He has been diagnosed with ADHD and faces challenges such as administrative tasks, managing deadlines, and dealing with the pressures of regulatory compliance, including taxes, which have compounded his anxiety and fear of failure. Additionally, his tendency to become overly familiar with colleagues complicates his professional relationships, sometimes leading to less desirable work situations. However, he uses his condition to fuel a desire to help others, especially those facing difficult circumstances or similar neurodiverse conditions.

In addition to these challenges, the Coach has developed coping mechanisms and strategies such as using a beeping clock to manage time, collaborating with partners and buddies who help him stay on track with his mental health and responsibilities, and developing pricing strategies. He also strategically utilizes medication to enhance daily productivity, although he has mixed feelings about its effects.

The Coach has a strong desire to assist others and excels in generating ideas and developing products from his unique perspective. His ability to nurture communities and establish connections while upholding strong moral principles shapes his approach to business. Interestingly, the Coach struggles with attracting customers due to his limited market reach and is very strong in personal connections but weak in group settings.

Case 3; "The Creator"

The Creator is a female entrepreneur in her mid-30s who faces various personal challenges. She was recently diagnosed with ADHD and has a history of depression. Her ADHD presents difficulties such as inconsistency, forgetfulness about appointments, and struggles in completing tasks. These challenges are made bigger by her transition from structured corporate environments, where she felt unable to utilize her potential and became depressed, to the flexibility of entrepreneurship. Her symptoms significantly impact her productivity, self-esteem, and ability to maintain a steady work rhythm. Her strengths include a strong sense of creativity in life, particularly in product and service design, as well as an understanding of others' struggles, which enriches customer interactions. She also acts decisively in challenging situations. Despite her low entrepreneurial confidence.

Recurring challenges for her include consistent motivation and often comparing herself unfavorably to others, particularly via social media, which undermines her self-worth and pricing. Best practices to address these challenges include minimizing time spent on social media, working in group settings for their inherent deadlines, writing down feelings and discussing them with friends or professionals, proactively seeking advice, and engaging in physical and mental calming activities.

Case 4; "The Analyst"

The Analyst is a young male entrepreneur who has been managing his business for three years. His story is about leveraging neurodiversity as a strength in the business environment. The Analyst's ADHD allows him to multitask effectively, which is an advantage in his role, particularly when dealing with complex tasks like software development and product marketing. However, his lack of interest in certain areas poses significant challenges, affecting his engagement and productivity.

Despite these challenges, The Analyst has cultivated a business philosophy that puts "people first," highlighting his commitment to building relationships and solving societal issues. His passion for his mission drives his work, although his perfectionist tendencies sometimes complicate his role as a natural entrepreneur. Despite his quick responsiveness and ability to thrive during periods of high excitement, he struggles with the tendency to disengage from uninteresting tasks, which can affect consistency and follow-through, particularly in the financial aspects of his business.

His best practices include researching people before networking, writing down problems and actively tackling them, learning about his ADHD to utilize its multitasking skills in various business tasks, avoiding things that don't work for his brain, adopting financial tools, and hiring team members whose skills complement his weaknesses .

Case 5: "The Planner"

The Planner is a young male entrepreneur who has been managing his business for three years. His journey with ADD has shaped his entrepreneurial experience, driving him to create systems to cope with his challenges. His mother, a schoolteacher familiar with neurodiversity, recognized his differences early on and started brainstorming with him for tailored methods. Medication proved unhelpful due to side effects, prompting him to rely on strategies like an elaborate to-do Excel sheet, precise routines for exercise and sleep, and a distraction-free workspace.

The Planner struggles with routine tasks and executive dysfunction, needing external motivation to start even enjoyable tasks. Deadlines drive him to work tirelessly until completion, but his ADD makes him risk-averse, preferring familiar tasks over new ones without established systems. He excels in group projects due to built-in deadlines, enjoys presenting and public speaking, and has a strong desire to improve and a strong sense of righteousness.

His strengths include developing systems to manage his flaws, implementing effective methods learned from others, working continuously until tasks are done, preferring group projects, and constantly seeking self-improvement. However, he faces challenges in delegating tasks, handling financial tasks, maintaining focus, overcoming imposter syndrome, and performing cold sales and routine tasks.

To manage these challenges, The Planner employs various strategies: experimenting to find effective methods, relying on breathing exercises, a healthy diet, coffee, and a strict sleep routine, using extensive Excel sheets, adaptive learning methods like audiobooks, gaining experience, focusing on skill specialization within his team, and prioritizing task completion over strict timelines. Despite the difficulties, his commitment to improvement and building effective systems helps him navigate his entrepreneurial journey.

Case 6: "The Writer"

The Writer is a male entrepreneur with ADHD who feels he has not yet reached his full potential, describing himself as "a Porsche driving on a cheap road." Despite his achievements, he often struggles with feeling unproductive, spending hours staring at his screen without accomplishing much. The repetitive nature of tedious tasks is a significant challenge for him. He previously worked a regular-wage job but found the lack of excitement led to a major accident. This experience pushed him towards entrepreneurship, where he discovered his passion for marketing production. He quickly identifies connections, possibilities, and solutions. After working for himself for two years, he co-founded Studio Story with his wife and has been an entrepreneur for 17 years.

Entrepreneurship is essential for The Writer because he values independence and cannot see himself as an employee. Although he does not necessarily enjoy entrepreneurship more than others, it provides the freedom to work at his own pace. He thrives on interesting problems and is capable of intense focus when tasks do not require much thinking. However, routine tasks and maintaining consistent productivity remain difficult for him. He did not finish high school but later earned a doctorate in medieval history, driven by his passion for the subject.

The Writer excels in innovation, strategy, and active roles in business development. He finds satisfaction in crossing items off lists and enjoys creative problem-solving. His strengths

include seeing the big picture, self-reflection, and writing from the heart, often using bullet points to organize his thoughts. However, he struggles with repetitive tasks, impatience, and retaining information from texts. Imposter syndrome and a strong sense of righteousness also affect him.

To manage his challenges, The Writer relies on lists, accountability, and creative outlets. He values structured environments and often needs external motivation to start tasks. Despite his difficulties, his ability to innovate and strategize adds significant value to his business.

Case 7: "The Visualizer"

The Visualizer is an interesting male entrepreneur and self-employed person in the Netherlands. Both he and his family have ADHD, which led him to realize that traditional school systems were ineffective for them. Gifted in creative problem-solving, he never excelled in school because it was too easy and didn't engage him. Instead, he leveraged his strengths. After 15 years in IT, The Visualizer identified significant strengths in his working methods. He can juggle multiple thoughts simultaneously, though this often confuses others. Over his career, he developed systems to communicate concepts clearly, evolving from using a whiteboard to various methods, including AI. His non-linear thinking jumps from A to E, requiring visualizations to align with others' processes.

Entrepreneurship for The Visualizer is about making an impact, which boosts his self-confidence. He noticed that many people reason through problems, while he solves them immediately. This drive to prove naysayers wrong motivates him to tackle even mundane tasks. His ADHD diagnosis clarified many aspects of his life. He believes he can function well in larger organizations but struggles with taking orders without a clear reason. He needs a passion to engage in projects and gains dopamine from activities like bargain hunting. His strengths include solving complex problems, finding workarounds, thinking outside the box, and quickly understanding business processes. Although he excels as a consultant, he finds entrepreneurship more challenging and prefers seeing the whole picture.

Challenges for The Visualizer include performing boring tasks, creating invoices, writing coherent business ideas, and working without context or space. To manage these, he follows best practices like finding dopamine-stimulating activities, letting the market determine pricing, embracing failure, and building a strong support network. By playing to his strengths and adapting systems, he navigates his entrepreneurial journey effectively.

Case 8: "The Strategist"

The Strategist is a male entrepreneur in his 50s. Like many with ADHD, he has battled severe depression and has had serious thoughts of suicide over the years. In his youth, he struggled with drug addiction, initially using amphetamines and later turning to speed due to the high cost of cocaine. Conversations are challenging for him, as he often doesn't finish sentences, jumps to conclusions, and struggles to complete his thoughts.

Highly autonomous, The Strategist has always had significant problems with authority. As a young man, he assumed others shared his perspective but quickly realized they didn't. Valuing freedom above all else, he is driven by a mission to effect change in the world. His motivation is deeply mission-driven, but after years of trying to fit in, he has adopted a general fuck you' stance against societal norms. He experienced severe exclusion in the workplace and outright

bullying in his youth. Refusing to wait for acceptance, he aims to be an example, having shifted his worldview from personal to political over time.

The Strategist believes people with ADHD must work twice as hard to understand half as much but excel at finding solutions. His mission-driven mindset, shaped by a difficult youth, makes him fearless. He speaks of 'onvervuld verlangen' (unfulfilled desire), noting that neurodiverse individuals often feel misunderstood and unable to achieve their desires. His goal is to create a world where everyone has 'zelfbeschikking' (self-determination), allowing people to live their lives in their own way. He advocates for acceptance and the creation of space for differences, aspiring to be a role model for this ideal.

His strengths include brainstorming new ideas, identifying the need for new products, visualizing business journeys in detail, and making contact with important stakeholders. He excels at getting others to believe in his vision and plans, exchanging information clearly, dealing with day-to-day problems, developing strategies, engaging in self-reflection, and making informed business model choices. However, The Strategist faces significant challenges such as estimating customer demand for new products, developing brand narratives, determining sales processes and customer journeys, establishing CRMs, organizing and maintaining financial records, and managing short-term focus and the tendency to take on too much. To manage these challenges, he emphasizes finding medication that works, describing the right medication as feeling like 'the curtains opened'.

Case 9 "The Futurist"

The Futurist is a male entrepreneur diagnosed with ADD at a young age. Despite his diagnosis, his primary school did not recognize it, providing no guidance or extra support. Nevertheless, he scored highly on his CITO test and pursued higher education. The Futurist enjoys autonomy, finding entrepreneurship a natural fit for his personality and skills. His intrinsic value of freedom drives his decision-making, making him comfortable with entrepreneurial challenges. He excels in problem-solving, quickly identifying inefficiencies and suggesting improvements. He enjoys helping other entrepreneurs by sharing his experiences and advice. Although capable of working in a team or under a boss, he finds rigid structures and micromanagement restrictive, often feeling he could "do better on his own." This preference sometimes limits his ability to work within teams requiring strict adherence to frameworks.

Leaning into his entrepreneurial strengths and remaining flexible has been essential in overcoming challenges. Pivoting into real estate after a burnout demonstrated his adaptability. Building teams with complementary skills and maintaining partnerships help share the workload and sustain business longevity. His strengths include valuing freedom, solving problems, doing good for the world, and finding efficient solutions. He relies on his gut feeling, enjoys helping people, and is creative, excelling in visualization and mindmapping. He learns effectively through movies and documentaries, explaining with examples, and generates trust in sales with meaning. However, The Futurist faces challenges such as issues with authority, compartmentalizing tasks, prioritizing focus, struggling with reading comprehension, and managing finances. He often requires a lot of preparation time and sometimes talks too much. Despite feeling capable of anything, tasks often feel twice as difficult for him compared to others, and he finds it hard to sell intangible concepts. He works best in structured environments but finds traditional testing methods ineffective for him. To manage these challenges, The Futurist uses AI for visualization, prefers presentations and pitching, and believes in self-

reliance. He advocates for getting a coach or mentor to gain new perspectives and advises against getting lost in details.

Case 10 "The Overseer"

The Overseer is a female entrepreneur whose ADHD manifests as always being on, constantly in flight-or-fight mode. She compares herself to a hunter-gatherer, always on the move and never secure. This has given her capabilities for multitasking and working at her own pace, often late at night. Simplicity and structure are her survival strategies, breaking down goals into simple, tangible steps. Her passion drives her focus, even on tasks she dislikes. Making money is a means to an end, necessary for achieving her goals.

Entrepreneurship with ADHD is challenging due to the immense energy it requires to harness. While discipline from a big dream fuels her, simple tasks can be overwhelming, and she struggles to finish sentences and stories. Highly sensitive, she has always been told she was too much. Through self-reflection, she realized self-justification was unnecessary, though the loneliness of entrepreneurship is mitigated by her independence.

Setting appropriate prices for her services was initially difficult, but she now lets the market determine her value. Understanding her addiction sensitivity, she avoids substances like alcohol, finding other coping mechanisms like breathing and movement. She does not use medication.

The Overseer no longer faces major problems as a top entrepreneur, outsourcing finances and people management to her family. Despite difficulties in sticking to plans, her systems and strategic meta-vision keep her on track. Her strengths include relentless focus, energy, and self-leadership. She excels at defining goals, coping strategies, and blending work with personal life. Her creativity and ability to see the big picture are notable.

Challenges include managing a team, finishing tasks, dealing with groceries, overthinking, energy management, and imposter syndrome. She sometimes feels like too much and struggles with justifying actions and feeling part of something. To manage these, she keeps things simple, adheres to structured routines, focuses on her goals and passions, and regularly revisits her 'why'. Breathing exercises and movement help her stay grounded.

CodeBook

Aggregate Dimension	Sub Category	First Order Concept	Detail
ADHD Diagnosis	Diagnosis Info	ADHD	ADHDEmotional regulation
		ADHD	ADHDProject Management
		ADD	ADDFocus & Task Management
		ADHD	ADHD Impulsivity
		ADD	ADD Mundane Tasks
		ADHD	ADHDMovement & Memory
		ADHD	ADHD Project Management
		ADHD	ADHDProject Management
		ADD	ADD Personal Management
		ADHD	ADHDPersonal Management
	Why Diagnosed	Administration	Difficulty with administration and deadlines.
		Movement & Memory	Remembering & sticking to plans & excessive movement
		Focus & Task Management	Challenges with writing
		Emotional regulation	Emotional outbursts when overwhelmed.
		Project Management	Energy depletion (due to repetitive tasks)
		Focus & Task Management	Challenges focusing and managing tasks.
		Impulsivity	Struggles with impulsiveness.
		Mundane Tasks	Issues with creating invoices and requiring external motivation.
		Movement & Memory	Difficulty initiating movement and forgetfulness.
		Project Management	Challenges with mundane tasks.
		Project Management	Issues with mundane tasks like invoicing.
		Personal Management	Issues with organizing appointments.
		Personal Management	Difficulty working without passion or context.
		Project Management	Difficulty finishing projects.
	Parents	Mom recognized	
	Project Management	Struggles with repetitive tasks and non-engaging activities.	
	Project Management	Difficulty sustaining interest after initial excitement fades.	
	Executive Dysfunction	Problems initiating tasks and executive dysfunction.	
	Task Initiation & Executive Dysfunction	Issues with starting tasks and procrastination.	
	Project Management	Challenges managing time effectively.	
	Problems with Diagnosis	No Recognition	No recognition in institutions / school
		Long Diagnosis	Long Diagnosis, sent to multiple institutions, long waiting list
		Misdiagnosis	First diagnosed Depression v Narcicisism
		Societal Misconception	Society views ADHD as either a superpower or a negative condition.
No meds available		Amphetamine wasn't available at one point, going to speed or coke	
After Diagnosis	insight	Not all problems come from ADHD	
	Different ADHD's	ADHD in Media not representable	
		Now you can work on yourself	
		Forgiveness	
	Misknowledge	Misknowledge in general	

		ADHD Symptoms		
ADHD Symptoms	Attention	Focus	Not interested when the topic isn't engaging	
		Focus	Inconsistent focus and difficulty completing tasks without structure	
		Details	Struggles with recalling details, finishing tasks	
		Forgetting	Forgetfulness	
		Racing Thoughts.	Racing thoughts and forgetfulness during tasks.	
		Forgetting	Forgets appointments	
		Symptoms	Difficulty with plans; forgets appointments	
	Communication	Inattentiveness	Cannot learn without feeling	
		Communication	Finding communication clarity challenging	
		Writing	Difficulty writing business ideas coherently	
	Emotional regulation	Communication	Interrupting sentences	
		Emotional regulation	Outbursts when overwhelmed, struggles completing forms	
		Emotional regulation	Impatience	
	Executive Dysfunction		High Highs & Low lows	
		Emotional regulation	Extremely driven by justice, affects emotional control	
		Task initiation	Struggles when there isn't enough context provided	
		Decision-making	Conflicted loyalty affects decisions	
		Emotional regulation	Struggles delegating tasks to others	
		Attention	General life difficulties related to mind being everywhere	
		Executive disfunction	Sometimes not being able to do anything	
		Memory	Easily forgets important things after a short time	
		Memory	Frequently forgets appointments and final details	
		Memory	Forgetting appointments and obligations	
		Memory	Forgetting tasks like making coffee or completing specific goals	
		Task initiation	Harder to get moving (ADD, without hyperactivity)	
		Motivation	Difficult to stay motivated due to inconsistency	
		Routine tasks	Cold sales, Executive Dysfunction, and individual tasks are difficult	
		Executive Disfunction	Difficulty with boring tasks and creating invoices	
		Task initiation	Struggles to start tasks, seeks perfection	
		Procrastination	Executive dysfunction leading to procrastination	
		Hyperactivity	Executive Disfunction	Executive Dysfunction
			Executive Disfunction	Avoids complex tasks
Admin tasks			Admin tasks overwhelming;	
Executive Disfunction	Avoids tasks requiring significant thought			
Fidgeting	Fidgets frequently, sometimes overly active			
Hyperactive	Hyperactivity			
Symptoms	Issues with hyperactivity, and this impacting my focus			
Organization	Hyperactivity.	Hyperactivity is primarily 'in your head.'		
	Fidgeting	Fidgeting		
	Organization	Difficulty with administration tasks, draining energy		
	Task completion	Problems with authority and organization		
	Task completion	Finds it hard to stick to priority lists		
	organizaion	Feels compelled to act quickly but sometimes unorganized		
	Task completion	Difficulty sticking to plans despite project management experience		

		Decision-making	Making choices, because you like everything
		Planning	Easy to make plans but struggles sticking to them
	Self-perception	comparing	Compares self to neurotypical people, feels inadequate
		Comparing	Sensitivity and insecurity stemming from societal perceptions
		No friends	Forgetting to connect with people, losing sight of them
		Lack of Self-confidence	Lack of Self-perception and acknowledgment from primary school
	Task completion	Small task completion	Struggles with small tasks that need to be done
		Task completion	Starts tasks but often doesn't finish them
		Task completion	Trouble wrapping up projects and organizing tasks
		Task completion / communication	Struggling to finish tasks or sentences due to racing thoughts

Entrepreneurial Strengths

Entrepreneurial Strengths	Problem Solving	Improvise	Switching topics easily
		Adaptability	Adapting quickly to challenges
		Work ethic	Consistently working without breaks
		Problem-solving skills.	Enjoys analyzing inefficiencies and suggesting improvements.
		Problem-solving skills.	Have to solve problems all my life
		Problem-solving skills.	Quick problem-solving
		Problem-solving skills.	Problem Solving
	Communication	Work ethic	Hardworking due to not wanting to fail
		Communication	Advising and understanding situations well
		Communication	Listening well to feedback
		Communication	Effective presenter and communicator
		Communication	Writing from the heart and in bullet points
		Communication	Explaining business ideas or Strategic Thinking
		Marketing	Building and marketing the product
	Creativity	Networking	Finding the right people
		Pitching	Talking & convincing
		Creativity	Product development skills
		Creativity	Designing and being creative
		Creativity	(Strategic) Creativity
		Creativity Freedom	Thrives with (creative) freedom
Creativity		Motivated by creative freedom	
Fairness / do good	Creativity / problem solving	Finding workarounds	
	Creativity	Strong at handling challenges creatively	
	Fairness	Opposition to unfairness	
	Fairness	Passionate about fairness and justice	
	Rigorousness	Strong sense of righteousness	
	Rigorousness	Want to do good	
	Rigorousness	Motivated by societal good	
Feeling	Fairness	Strong sense of justice	
	Integrity	Honesty	
	Social impact	Desire to contribute positively to society	
	Empathy	Feeling a strong sense of loyalty	
	Empathy	Understanding others' challenges	

	Empathy	Feeling toward team members
	Supportiveness	Taking (a lot of) time for people
	Supportiveness	Easing the impact on team members
Innovation	Effectiveness	Working well on medication
	Effectiveness	Adding value quickly
	Innovation	Creatively solving problems
	Innovation	Innovating strategies and contributing to business development
	Innovation	Thinking outside the box
	Innovation	Innovative thinker
Leadership	Leadership	Taking necessary actions and responsibility for the team
	Leadership	Strong leadership skills
	Leadership	Skilled at inspiring and motivating others
	Leadership	Collaborative leadership
	Leadership	Excellent Leadership skills
	Leadership	Good at Leadership
	Organization	Tracking all aspects of the business
	Decisiveness	Taking decisive action during crises
	Team-building	Finding the right people for his team
	Team-building	Effective at managing team morale / positive mindset
	Team Building.	Builds a team that complements her working style.
	Team Building.	Work with a team that understands (my) ADHD
	Team Building.	Determination
	Team Building.	Team Collaboration
	Team-building	Effectively builds company culture
	Teamwork	Valuing relationships
	Teamwork	Comfortable with group projects and deadlines
	Teamwork	Encourages inclusion
Trust-building	Building trust with clients	
Meta Overview	Expertise	Proficiency in essential skills
	Mata Vision	Meta Vision
	Mata Vision	Always up to date with all departments
	Strategy	Strategic design
	Meta Vision	Do many things at the same time
	Expertise	Skilled consultant
	Meta Analysis	Quickly understanding business processes
	Market analysis	Strong understanding of industry trends and data analysis
	Market analysis	Understanding of market positioning
	Multitasking	Thinking about multiple things simultaneously (when not on meds)
	Multitasking	Task-switching skills
Mindset	Positivity	Optimism about entrepreneurial potential ("sky's the limit")
	Positivity	Mindset and keeping negativity out of others
	Positivity	Enthusiastic
	Risk management	Risk-averse approach
	Problem-solving	When I set my mind to it, I can solve every problem
	Self-confidence.	ADHD's life of problem solving contributes to a high level of confidence

	Self-Awareness	Problem-solving	High problem-solving skills	
		Ambition	Ambition to develop full potential as an entrepreneur	
		Confidence	Self-Awareness built through reflection	
		Self-awareness	Clarity from ADHD diagnosis	
		Self-awareness	Being self-aware about low entrepreneurial Self-Awareness	
		Self-improvement	Willingness to improve and do better	
	Strategic thinking	Self-improvement	Self-education and reflection skills	
		Strategic thinking	Ability to make strategic decisions by trusting on intuition	
		Strategic thinking	Strategic thinking and innovation	
		Strategic thinking	Able to identify growth opportunities	
	Goal Setting.	Can set and achieve ambitious goals.		
	Technical expertise	Strong knowledge in web development		
	Vision	Seeing the big picture while Meta Overview		
Entrepreneurial Problems / Challenges				
Entrepreneurial Problems / Challenges	Explaining	Explaining to Neurotypical People		
		Communication	Communication	Forgetting to connect with people/departments.
			Communication	Writing coherently and completing sentences.
			Connection	Difficulty networking
			Connection	Struggles with social interactions
			Communication	Struggles with structuring thoughts clearly in written communication
			Communication	Writing down business ideas coherently.
			Communication	Talking too much sometimes.
				Not being able to communicate the vision that's clear in your head
			Communication	Repeating words in the head.
			Connecting	Cannot make contact with the right people
			Communication	Next steps planned while speaking.
	Impulsivity		Impulsivity	Difficulty controlling impulses.
		Impulsivity	Impatience and sensation seeking.	
	Learning	Learning	Slow to grasp some things, quickly understanding others.	
		Learning	Enjoying reading but facing comprehension challenges.	
		Learning	Conventional school methods don't work well.	
	Management	Client Management	Following customer requests without strong reasoning (result = drain)	
		Financial Management	Organizing and maintaining financial records.	
		(Financial) Management	Keeping overview of everything	
		Financial Management	Taking the right spending decisions	
		Management	Problems with authority.	
		People Management	Finding the right people	
		Management	Managing/leading a team.	
		Market Research	Estimating customer demand for new products.	
		Planning	Making a plan is not difficult, but sticking to it, very much'	
		Project Management	Starting tasks	
	Marketing	Management	It's super difficult to keep people aligned who are not getting paid."	
Branding		Developing the brand narrative.		
Motivation	Marketing	Convincing neurotypical people		
	Motivation	Difficulty in getting motivated when there are no deadlines.		
	Motivation	Inconsistent motivation and productivity.		

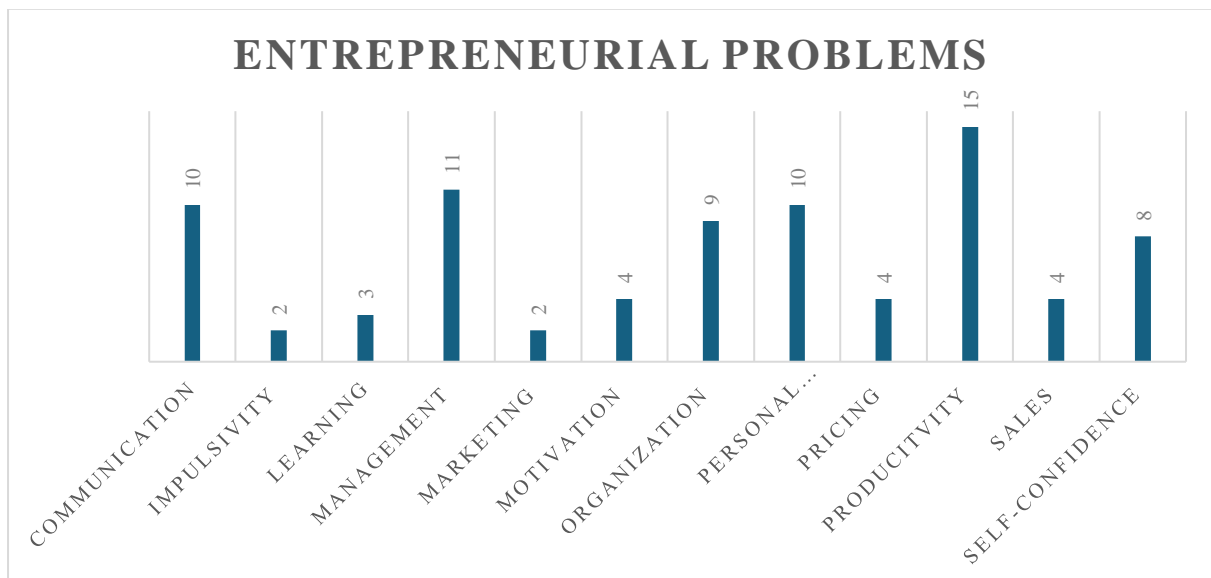
	Motivation	Believing in working for passion over money.
	Motivation	Learning without motivation is not doable'
Organization	Writing	Struggles writing down business elements.
	Administration	Administrative challenges (missing tax deadlines, managing tasks).
	Organization	Difficulties sticking to plans.
	Organization	Organizational and business setup issues.
	Organization	Maintaining priority lists, gets distracted easily
	Organization	Creating invoices
	Organization	Establishing a CRM.
	Organization	Compartmentalizing tasks into smaller segments.
	Organization	Sticking to the plan.
	Personal Management	Decision-Making
Personal Management		When I'm not sure / discovering , I follow clients blindly'
Personal Management		Personal Management issues.
Memory		Problems remembering small tasks.
Memory		Good Personal Management for retaining information.
Mental Health		Occasionally overwhelmed mentally.
Mental Health		Prone to addiction.
Risk-Taking		Reluctance to take risks in entrepreneurship.
Personal Management		Overworking due to ADHD or high emotions
Personal Management		NEEDS Autonomy
Pricing	Pricing	Difficulty pricing services or setting personal prices.
	Pricing	Setting an adequate price.
	Pricing	Setting prices for oneself.
Productivity	Productivity	Challenges completing small tasks.
		Staying on the Path
	Productivity	Trouble completing tasks.
	Productivity	Procrastination and reluctance to show face.
	Complication	Complicated tasks hinder productivity
	Productivity	Starting tasks and trying to be perfect.
	Productivity	Repetitive, mundane tasks are challenging.
	Productivity	Doing things when alone
	Productivity	Working without context or framework.
	Productivity	Managing short-term focus and the tendency to take on too much.
	Focus	Focus and not able to avoid distractions
	Productivity	Tasks are twice as difficult.
	Energy	Balancing Energy
	Productivity	Works best in structured environments.
Productivity	Difficulty finishing tasks.	
Sales	Sales	Cold sales and routine tasks.
	Selling yourself	Selling yourself on Social Media
	Sales	Determining the sales process and customer journey.
	Sales	Selling "nothing" is difficult.
Self-Confidence	Self-Confidence	Afraid of mistakes.
	Self-Confidence	Pricing and self-presentation issues.
	Self-Confidence	Low self-confidence.

		Self-Confidence	Tried too long to fit in.
		Self-Confidence	Justifying actions.
		Self-Confidence	Never fitting in.
		Self-Confidence	Impostor syndrome.
		Self-Esteem	Comparing oneself to neurotypical people leads to inadequacy.
		Solutions / Best Practices	
Solutions / Best Practices	Creativity / Flexibility	Creativity	Use "out-of-the-box" thinking for Flexibility
		Creativity	Create strategic designs for improved client communication
		Experimentation	Try various methods to see what works
		Organization	Create comprehensive Excel sheets
		Preparation	Research others before conversations
	Learning Strategy	Problem-Solving	Create comprehensive workarounds
		Learning Strategy	Utilize adaptive learning methods
		Simplicity	I make everything measurable
		Learning Strategy	Invest in training and education
	Mindset	Learning Strategy	Provide training workshops for Flexibility learning
		Mindset	Accept failure
		Mindset	Proactively tackle challenges
		Mindset	Stay patient with oneself
	Self-Care	Passion	Find enjoyment in data analysis
		Self-Care	Go to the gym regularly
		Self-Care	Read more, moderate online content, reduce social media use
		Self-Care	Take social media breaks
		Self-Care	Step outside or rest to recharge energy
		Self-Care	Use coffee and exercise
	Self-Reflection	Self-Care	Engage in regular exercise for mental clarity
		Self-Reflection	Write down feelings for clarity
		Self-Reflection	Write down problems
		Self-Reflection	Reflect frequently
	Strategy	Self-Reflection	Analyze business relationships and their emotional impact
		Adaptability	Use flexible approaches instead of rigid structures
		Business Strategy	Seek brand identity advice
		Business Strategy	Adjust pricing strategies
Business Strategy		Develop personalized strategies	
Business Strategy		Improve client communication	
Business Strategy		Develop a more flexible business approach	
Financial Strategy		Avoid free services	
Support Network	Values Alignment	Focus on social justice and align business goals	
	Support Network	Build a team that understands ADHD	
	Support Network	Find an accountability partner for guidance	
	Support Network	Hire an accountant who understands ADHD	
	Support Network	Create a supportive environment	
	Support Network	Discuss challenges with others	
	Role model	Surround yourself with role models	
Support Network	Focus on team collaboration		

Task Management	Support Network	Foster emotional understanding with team members
	Task Management	Avoid tasks that don't align with ADHD tendencies
	Task Management	Work in bullet points
	Task Management	Set deadlines and work in a group
	Task Management	Quantify aspects of tasks
	Task Management	Write detailed to-do lists
	Task Management	Set specific targets and organize workshops
	Task Management	Write down strategies to streamline goals
	Task Management	Plan tasks on a whiteboard
	Task Management	Mindmapping
	Time Management	Install an hourly beeping clock

Figure 4.1

Overarching themes of Entrepreneurial and the number of times mentioned



Chapter 5

Table 5.5

Research Findings VS Normal Entrepreneurial Challenges

Research Finding	“Normal” Entrepreneurial Challenge
	Entrepreneurial Challenges
Difficulty managing work-life balance	(Positive) Work-Life Balance
Camping with depression	Mental Health
Keeping up with the latest trends	Adapting to industry trends / emerging technologies
Life-Long Learning	Skill Development
Different (financial) business output	Fluctuating Business Performance
Working for a meaning	Contributing to the community and addressing social issues
Spending decisions	Effective Management of Money
Difficult to motivate and lead a team	Effective Management of Human Capital
Difficulty Networking	Building and Maintaining a network of contacts
Manage short-term focus and the propensity to take on too much	Effective Management of Time
ADHD let me to overworking	
Difficult with stabilizing working hours	Inconsistent working hours

Table 5.6

Entrepreneurial Challenges with a High (self-attributed) impact on ESE

Category (High on ESE)	Challenge
Structured day/meetings	Planning Acquiring customers Dosing Energy Administration Convincing neurotypical people Choosing between ideas Comparing myself to others Considering strategic partnerships Saying no to some ideas Always thinking others have the best intentions / being too loyal
Self-pricing	How to price myself Setting an adequate price Difficulty pricing services / pricing myself
Self-presentation	How to present myself Not wanting to show my face
ADHD-related challenges	Fighting against ADHD, unable to accept it Showing people what ADHD means Procrastination (regardless of deadlines) Difficulty taking the first step Not project managing for others Staying consistent Blocking things in the agenda doesn't work Sticking to the planning Forgetting uninteresting things Trying too long to fit in Tasks often feeling twice as difficult for me compared to others The way I'm tested doesn't work for me, but it seems to work for those who only deliver half of their work

Targeting and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working best in structured environments but cannot create structure Who to target Communicating in a convincing way Exchanging information clearly; writing my business idea in everyday terms
Feelings of inadequacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparing to neurotypical people Feeling inadequate Relatively low self-confidence Imposter syndrome Never feeling part of something
Task management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not picking up to-dos Responding to people and completing necessary tasks Delegating tasks and responsibilities to employees Managing short-term focus and the propensity to take on too much Dealing effectively with day-to-day problems
Reading and writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not finishing things Reading and comprehending lengthy texts Writing comprehensive texts Coherently writing the business idea
Business operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing cold sales and mundane routine tasks Doing boring tasks Making invoices Deciding on administrative and invoicing systems or software (Administration/invoicing) Understanding and complying with relevant regulations, certifications, and potential subsidies (Regulations) Reading and interpreting financial statements Managing the financial assets of my business Organizing and maintaining financial records Estimating customer demand for a new product or service Estimating customer demand for a new product Developing the brand narrative Determining the sales process and customer journey Establishing a CRM Starting a new venture (registering & setting the first steps)
Energy and focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining focus even after the initial excitement fades Difficulty dosing energy Developing strategies for staying engaged and avoiding boredom (Entrepreneurship that continuously energizes) Addressing potential issues with patience and the tendency to give up (Impatient and quick to give up) Trying to justify actions Sometimes TOO much
Team management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing/leading a team
Daily life challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doing groceries Every word I say happens 3x in my head When I start a sentence, my head already makes the next steps Prone to addiction

Chapter 6

Table 6.2

Best Tips (Categorized) from Entrepreneurs with ADHD

Category	Best Practices
General Practices	Working in bullet points Install a clock Accountability partner
Administrative Strategies	Accepting failure Hiring an accountant Creating a supportive environment Focusing on social justice Proactively tackle problems
Self-Management Techniques	Quantify things Try many different things Coffee Exercise and sleep Physical activity
Emotional Well-being	Natural coping strategies Write down feelings Take social media breaks Seek advice
Business Development	Engage in restful activities Investing in training Setting specific targets Developing flexibility
Presentation & Communication	Acceptance of diagnosis Use AI for visualization Use presentations Get a coach or mentor
Personal Goals & Philosophy	Don't stay too long in details Keep things simple Work from your goal Define what you want Practice breathing exercises

Category	Best Practices
Overview (mental hyperactivity, distraction & forgetfulness)	Simplify tasks / quantify things Focus on key areas Make lists that you can tick off
Emotional regulation	Hiring an accountant Creating a supportive environment Focusing on social justice Proactively tackle problems
Self-Management Techniques	Quantify things Try many different things Coffee Exercise and sleep Physical activity
Emotional Well-being	Natural coping strategies Write down feelings

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take social media breaks Seek advice Engage in restful activities Investing in training Setting specific targets Developing flexibility Acceptance of diagnosis Working in bullet points Install a clock Accountability partner Accepting failure
Communication & Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use AI for coherent writing Visualize your thoughts Use presentations/ white boards Get a coach or mentor (specifically for communication) Don't stay too long in details Self Reflect on your difficulties
Executive Dysfunction (Extreme Procrastination & Task Completion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep things simple Work from your goal Create a 'what works for me' document Define what you want and work for a WHY or mission Meditation Accountability Buddy
