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The experience of role balance among Australian working women with multigenerational caring responsibilities

Kiah Lee Evans
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**The Experience of Role Balance
Among Australian Working Women With
Multigenerational Caring Responsibilities**



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This thesis is presented for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

Approximately 10% of women in developed countries are working sandwich generation women, who combine paid employment with ongoing multigenerational caring responsibilities for at least one child under 18 years and one parent or parent-in-law. This role combination is expected to become more common due to the increased workforce participation of women, childbirth at an older age, reduced fertility rates, an ageing population and a trend towards community based care. Although there are numerous benefits related to membership in the working sandwich generation, there are also a range of costs related to role participation and quality of life. In particular, these women face a complex array of challenges to achieving a satisfactory level of role balance. This thesis describes a two-staged research project, where multiple methods were utilised to explore role balance related experiences and strategies among Australian working sandwich generation women. The Model of Juggling Occupations was developed to provide a conceptual framework linking the six papers contained within this thesis.

The first stage of this research project focused on exploring role balance experiences among 18 working sandwich generation women through a case study approach, where data were collected through a questionnaire, time diary and interview (Papers I – IV). The three methodological approaches were utilised to investigate the within-role factors of activity participation, values, interests, perceived competence and habits for the three defining roles of mother, parental carer and working, along with the enriching and conflicting between-role interactions. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were utilised to reveal that working sandwich generation women tended to experience a moderate level of role balance. Interests and habits were the two within-role factors most strongly associated with the experience of role balance. Although enriching interactions between roles facilitated role balance to some extent, between-role conflict posed a greater barrier to role balance outcomes.

The second stage of this research project focused on identifying the role balance strategies utilised by working sandwich generation women (Papers V – VI). This was achieved through interviews with the 18 women from the case study approach, along with a viewpoint study of 31 working sandwich generation women and 42 occupational therapists. Findings from the interviews revealed the women used six types of within-role balance strategies: living with integrity, being the best you can, doing what you love, loving what you do, remembering why, and searching for signs of success. The women also described six types of between-role balance strategies: maintaining health and wellbeing, repressing perfectionism, managing time and energy, releasing responsibility, nurturing social connection, and reciprocating. The viewpoint study revealed the most helpful specific role balance strategies were allowing enough time for rest, sleep and ‘me time’, along with relinquishing control, embracing realistic expectations and using time management techniques.

Overall, this thesis provides evidence that role balance among Australian working sandwich generation women is a desirable and achievable state, despite numerous challenges and complexities. These women often achieved role balance at the level of “*doing*” activities associated with their multiple roles. However, they struggled at times with “*being*” in a single role in the moment due to conflicting demands on their attention. It is possible that achieving a higher level of role balance is reliant on the process of “*becoming*” a working sandwich generation woman, where they balance “*doing*” and “*being*” aspects within and between their multiple roles. These findings add substantial knowledge to this field and have the potential to guide the development of services to improve role balance among working women with multigenerational caring responsibilities, along with the introduction of policies to optimise their participation within their homes, workplaces and communities.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- iii. contain any defamatory material.

This thesis contains published work and work prepared for publication, some of which has been co-authored. The bibliographical details of published work and statements of contribution are presented in the preface for each paper.

The work involved in designing the studies described in this thesis was performed primarily by Kiah Evans (the candidate). The thesis outline and experimental design was developed and executed by the candidate in consultation with Associate Professor Sonya Girdler, Professor Jeannine Millsted, Dr Janet Richmond and Dr Marita Falkmer (the candidate's supervisors), along with Professor Torbjorn Falkmer, Dr Richard Parson and Dr Petra Wagman (co-authors). The candidate was responsible for participant recruitment, data collection, data management, data analysis and preparing manuscripts.

The candidate drafted the original thesis, with Associate Professor Sonya Girdler, Professor Jeannine Millsted, Dr Janet Richmond, Dr Marita Falkmer and Professor Torbjorn Falkmer providing feedback on drafts until the examinable version was finalised.

Candidate signature:

Primary supervisor signature:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I first commenced my doctoral studies nearly ten years ago, I disregarded advice on surviving the “*research journey*” as only applicable to other postgraduate students. The past decade has been a humbling experience as I have faced intellectual, professional and personal challenges that have led me to believe that PhD is an abbreviation for Doctor of Persistence. It turns out that the concept of a research journey was very applicable to my life, as completing this thesis has been a transformational process of doing, being and becoming a research scholar. The nature of my research topic was also interwoven with my personal metamorphosis from a recently married full-time academic with no children to a working mother. As I approach the end of this research journey, I have many reasons to feel grateful. Hence I would like to express my appreciation to ...

First and foremost, I owe my deepest gratitude to Associate Professor Sonya Girdler for her unwavering support as a supervisor, mentor and friend. Sonya has continuously set high expectations and coached me to achieve my full potential, but has always been there to catch me when I fall (literally and metaphorically).

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- Dr Marita Falkmer for encouraging me to extend my analytic and writing skills by asking “*so what?*” in the kindest possible way.
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-
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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Chapter 2

Evans K, Millsteed J, Richmond J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (2014)
The complexity of role balance: Support for the Model of Juggling
Occupations. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 21:
334-347.

Chapter 3

Evans K, Millsteed J, Richmond J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (Under
Review) The impact of within and between role experiences on role
balance outcomes for working sandwich generation women. *Social
Indicators Research* (Manuscript number: SOCI-D-16-00648).

Chapter 4

Evans K, Falkmer M, Richmond J, Millsteed J, Parsons R, Falkmer T, et al.
(Under Review) The momentary experience of role balance among
working sandwich generation women: Facilitators and barriers.
Journal of Happiness Studies (Manuscript number: JOHS-D-16-
00328).

Chapter 5

Evans K, Richmond J, Millsteed J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (Under
Review) The rewards and challenges of combining employment with
dual caring responsibilities for children and parents. *Academy of
Management Journal* (Manuscript number: AMJ-2016-0724).

Chapter 6

Evans K, Millsted J, Richmond J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (2016)
Working sandwich generation women utilise strategies within and
between roles to achieve role balance. PLOS ONE 11: 1-23.

Chapter 7

Evans K, Girdler S, Falkmer T, Richmond J, Wagman P, Millsted J,
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generation women and occupational therapists on role balance
strategies. Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy
(Manuscript number: SOCC-2016-0101).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Evans K, Girdler S, Falkmer M, Millsteed J, Richmond J, Falkmer T (2016) Occupational therapists and the quest for role balance. Paper presented at the OT Australia WA State Conference, Perth, Australia.

Evans K (2014) Role balance amongst working women with caring responsibilities. Entry presented at the Edith Cowan University Three Minute Thesis Competition Final, Perth, Australia.

Evans K, Millsteed J, Richmond J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (2014) Role balance amongst working 'sandwich generation' women. Paper presented at the 16th International Congress of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Yokohama, Japan.

Evans K, Millsteed J, Richmond J, Falkmer M, Falkmer T, Girdler S (2014) Role balance, health and wellbeing for working 'sandwich generation' women. Paper presented at The College of Occupational Therapists 38th Annual Conference and Exhibition, Brighton, United Kingdom.

Evans K (2010). Role balance. Entry presented at the Edith Cowan University Three Minute Thesis Competition Final, Perth, Australia.

Evans K, Girdler S, Millsteed J (2010) An occupational theory approach to exploring role balance. Paper presented at the OT Australia WA State Conference, Perth, Australia.

Evans K (2008) A dynamic four-dimensional model of occupational balance. Paper presented at the World Congress of Health Professionals, Perth, Australia.

Evans K (2007) A dynamic four-dimensional model of occupational balance. Paper presented at the 4th Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Congress, Hong Kong, China.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

USE OF THESIS.....	i
ABSTRACT	iii
DECLARATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	xi
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS.....	xiii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xv
LIST OF TABLES	xxi
LIST OF FIGURES	xxv

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
INTRODUCTION	3
ROLE BALANCE.....	3
WORKING SANDWICH GENERATION WOMEN.....	6
Prevalence.....	10
Role Participation	12
Quality of Life	13
Role Balance Strategies	15
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	16
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT.....	17
Stage One – Role Balance Related Experiences	17
Stage Two – Role Balance Strategies.....	18
THESIS OUTLINE.....	18
Paper I – Pilot Study.....	18
Paper II – Questionnaire Study.....	20
Paper III – Time Diary Study	20
Paper IV – Interview Study (Experiences)	20
Paper V – Interview Study (Strategies)	21
Paper VI – Viewpoint Study.....	21

General Discussion.....	21
REFERENCES.....	23
 CHAPTER 2	
PAPER I – PILOT STUDY.....	37
PREFACE.....	39
ABSTRACT.....	40
INTRODUCTION	41
Conceptual Framework.....	42
METHODS	45
Design.....	45
Sample	46
Tools	47
Procedures	52
Data.....	54
Analysis	54
Ethics	56
FINDINGS	57
DISCUSSION	61
Limitations.....	63
Conclusion.....	65
REFERENCES.....	66
 CHAPTER 3	
PAPER II – QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY	73
PREFACE.....	75
ABSTRACT.....	76
INTRODUCTION	77
METHODS	79
Design.....	79
Sample	80
Tools	84
Procedures	88

Analysis	89
FINDINGS	90
Role Balance Status	90
Role Related Features	91
Within-Role Characteristics	92
Between-Role Interactions	96
DISCUSSION	100
Limitations and Recommendations for Research	103
Conclusion	105
REFERENCES.....	106
CHAPTER 4	
PAPER III – TIME DIARY STUDY	113
PREFACE.....	115
ABSTRACT.....	116
INTRODUCTION	117
METHODS	120
Design.....	120
Participants	121
Tools	122
Procedures	123
Analysis	124
FINDINGS.....	126
Role Balance Status	127
Within-Role Balance – Objective Time Use	129
Within-Role Balance – Subjective Time Use.....	141
Between-Role Balance	150
DISCUSSION	150
Objective Time Use	150
Subjective Time Use.....	154
Role Interactions.....	156
Limitations.....	156
REFERENCES.....	159

CHAPTER 5

PAPER IV – INTERVIEW STUDY (EXPERIENCES)	167
PREFACE	169
ABSTRACT	170
INTRODUCTION	171
METHODS	173
Sample	173
Data Collection	175
Qualitative Data Analysis	176
Quantitative Data Analysis	177
Ethical Considerations	179
FINDINGS	179
Overall-Role Balance Status	179
Within-Role Experience	183
Between-Role Experience	193
DISCUSSION	199
REFERENCES	203

CHAPTER 6

PAPER V – INTERVIEW STUDY (STRATEGIES)	207
PREFACE	209
ABSTRACT	210
INTRODUCTION	211
METHODS	214
Sample	215
Data Collection	216
Data Analysis.....	218
FINDINGS	218
Within-Role Balance Strategies.....	219
Between-Role Balance Strategies.....	226
DISCUSSION	240
Limitations	244
REFERENCES	246

CHAPTER 7

PAPER VI – VIEWPOINT STUDY	255
PREFACE.....	257
ABSTRACT.....	258
INTRODUCTION	259
METHODS	262
Q Sort Development	263
Q Sort Administration	264
Factor Analysis	271
Interpretation of Factors	272
FINDINGS.....	273
Factor Interpretation in the Working Sandwich Generation Women Group.....	273
Factor Interpretation in the Occupational Therapy Group	282
DISCUSSION	290
Recommendations for Practice	293
Methodological Considerations.....	294
Conclusions	295
REFERENCES.....	296

CHAPTER 8

GENERAL DISCUSSION	301
INTRODUCTION	303
ROLE BALANCE RELATED EXPERIENCES.....	303
Role Balance Status	304
Within-Role Experiences.....	309
Within-Role Characteristics and Role Balance	319
Combining Multiple Roles	321
Between-Role Interactions and Role Balance	324
ROLE BALANCE STRATEGIES	325
Relative Helpfulness of Role Balance Strategies	325
Contrasting Viewpoints on Role Balance Strategies.....	332

CONTRIBUTIONS	334
Understanding of Phenomena.....	334
Theory Development	335
Research Methods.....	337
Knowledge Translation.....	339
LIMITATIONS	341
Research Design	342
Sample	343
Measurement Tools	345
Researcher Bias	346
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	347
Recommendations for Working Sandwich Generation Women	348
Recommendations for Families and Friends	350
Recommendations for Organisations.....	351
Recommendations for Practitioners.....	353
Recommendations for Educators.....	364
Recommendations for Governments	365
Recommendations for Researchers	367
FINAL COMMENTS	370
REFERENCES.....	371
 APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Published Manuscript (Paper I)	391
Appendix B: Questionnaire	407
Appendix C: Time Diary	423
Appendix D: Interview	431
Appendix E: Information Letter and Consent Form.....	435
Appendix F: Model Of Juggling Occupations Scale	443
Appendix G: Ethics Approval Letter.....	453
Appendix H: Published Manuscript (Paper V).....	457
Appendix I: Information Letters	483
Appendix J: Q Sort Instructions	491
Appendix K: Research Project Summary Report.....	505

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Description of Studies Reporting on Working Sandwich Generation Women	8
Table 1.2 Summary of Research Methods for Papers.....	22
Table 2.1 Questions Related to the Model of Juggling Occupations Within Each Data Collection Method.....	48
Table 2.2 Within-Role Balance Findings for Each Data Collection Method.....	59
Table 2.3 Between-Role Balance Findings for Each Data Collection Method.....	62
Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Socio-demographic and Role Characteristics of Sample	81
Table 3.2 Median (Range) of Within-Role Characteristics, With Cronbach's Alpha as a Measure of Internal Consistency for Composite Scores	93
Table 3.3 Significant Correlation Coefficients for Relationship Between Within Role Characteristics and Role Balance Outcomes	94
Table 3.4 Median (Range) of Between-Role Interactions	98
Table 3.5 Significant Correlations of Between-Role Characteristics and Role Balance Outcomes	99
Table 4.1 Literature Estimates of Activity Participation for Women According to Work Status and Family Responsibilities.....	119
Table 4.2 Distribution of Role Balance Scores	128
Table 4.3 Role Balance and the Environment	129
Table 4.4 Summary of Within-Role Balance – Objective Time Use, Specifically Frequency and Duration of Activity Participation as Primary or Secondary Activities with Associated Role Balance	130

Table 4.5 Summary and GEE Analysis of Within-Role Objective Time Use Characteristics, Specifically Participation in Secondary Activities, For Each Role	131
Table 4.6 Significant Results from GEE Analysis of the Impact of Within-Role Objective Time Use Characteristics, Specifically Participation in Multiple Activities and Participation in Specific Type of Activity, on Role Balance and Role Imbalance	132
Table 4.7 Significant Results from GEE Analysis of the Impact of Within-Role Objective Time Use Characteristics, Specifically Habits in Relation to Temporal Patterns of Episode Duration and Start Time, on Role Balance and Role Imbalance	139
Table 4.8 Summary and GEE Analysis of Within-Role Subjective Time Use Characteristics for Each Role.....	142
Table 4.9 Significant Results from GEE Analysis of the Impact of Within-Role Subjective Time Use Characteristics on Role Balance and Role Imbalance.....	145
Table 4.10 Summary and GEE Analysis of Between Role Interactions During Episodes with Two or More Roles	151
Table 5.1 Participant Demographics and Relationships with Role Balance.....	175
Table 5.2 Model of Juggling Occupations Scale Rating Scores.....	181
Table 5.3 Example Quotes to Illustrate each Within-Role Experience Theme for the Mother, Parental Carer and Worker Roles	184
Table 5.4 Example Quotes to Illustrate each Between-Role Experience Theme	194
Table 6.1 Example Quotes to Illustrate each Within-Role Balance Strategy for the Mother, Parental Carer and Worker Roles	221
Table 6.2 Types and Examples of Activities to Maintain Physical Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Along with Common Maintenance Strategies	228

Table 7.1 Q Sort Statements, Factor Arrays of Viewpoints (Ranking) and Z-scores	265
Table 7.2 Working Sandwich Generation Women Demographics.....	273
Table 7.3 Working Sandwich Generation Women Viewpoint One: With Help I Can Keep Going	275
Table 7.4 Working Sandwich Generation Women Viewpoint Two: With Social Connection I Can Keep Going	277
Table 7.5 Working Sandwich Generation Women Viewpoint Three: With Good Health I Can Keep Going.....	278
Table 7.6 Working Sandwich Generation Women Viewpoint Four: With Time Management I Can Keep Going	280
Table 7.7 Occupational Therapist Demographics	283
Table 7.8 Occupational Therapist Viewpoint One: Managing Emotions Should Be Your Focus.....	284
Table 7.9 Occupational Therapist Viewpoint Two: Achieving Priorities Should Be Your Focus	285
Table 7.10 Occupational Therapist Viewpoint Three: Balancing Activities Should Be Your Focus	287
Table 7.11 Occupational Therapist Viewpoint Four: Releasing Responsibilities Should Be Your Focus	288
Table 8.1 Role Balance Status – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance	305
Table 8.2 Within-Role Characteristics for Mother – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance	311
Table 8.3 Within-Role Characteristics for Parental Carer – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance	314
Table 8.4 Within-Role Characteristics for Worker – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance	317
Table 8.5 Significant Associations Between Within-Role Characteristic Variables and Role Balance	319
Table 8.6 Between-Role Interactions – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance	323
Table 8.7 Relative Helpfulness of Within-Role Strategies	327

Table 8.8	Relative Helpfulness of Between-Role Strategies	329
Table 8.9	Similarities Between Working Sandwich Generation Women and Occupational Therapy Viewpoints on the Most Helpful Role Balance Strategies	333
Table 8.10	Comparison of Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Two Samples of Working Sandwich Generation Women and the General Australian Population	344
Table 8.11	Matrix of Potential Service Delivery Models	357
Table 8.12	Potential Topics To Be Included In Intervention Program.....	360
Table 8.13	Example Learning Methods During a 2.5 Hour Group Session, With Alternatives For Other Service Delivery Models	361
Table 8.14	Relevant Australian Federal, State / Territory and Local Government Departments and Agencies in Relation to Role Balance Among Working Sandwich Generation Women	365

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Role Balance as the Core Topic Within this Research Project, Positioned in Relation to Other Approaches to Studying Life Balance	4
Figure 1.2 Working Sandwich Generation Women as the Core Population Studied in this Research Project, Illustrated as the Junction Between the Roles of Mother, Parental Carer and Worker	6
Figure 1.3 Structure of Thesis with Relationship Between Chapters	19
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework: Model of Juggling Occupations	42
Figure 2.2 Sample and Sequence of Data Collection and Feedback Procedures Across the Two Phase Pilot Study	46
Figure 2.3 Variations in Role Balance Shown in Time Diary for Five Participants.....	57
Figure 3.1 The Model of Juggling Occupations	79
Figure 3.2 Relationship Between Key Study Variables, With Associated Assessment Tools.....	85
Figure 5.1 The Model of Juggling Occupations and Themes Identified Through Interviews	174
Figure 6.1 Within-Role and Between-Role Balance Strategies	219
Figure 6.2 Key Challenges Faced by Working Sandwich Generation Women and Associated Role Balance Strategies	220
Figure 7.1 Q Sort Symmetrical Sorting Grid Used for Online Administration, with an Example Statement.....	269
Figure 8.1 Highlighted Papers Illustrate the Focus of Stage One	304
Figure 8.2 Highlighted Papers Illustrate the Focus of Stage Two	325
Figure 8.3 A Bio-Ecological Description of Working Sandwich Generation Women and Key Stakeholders	348

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

As a result of a lengthy research and community consultation process, the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission identified working women with multigenerational caring responsibilities, otherwise known as working sandwich generation women, as a priority group at risk of role imbalance [1]. There is evidence that these women experience high levels of role imbalance as a result of their numerous responsibilities [2-8]. However, some research suggests that positive role balance related experiences and adaptation are possible [6,9,10]. Hence, role balance among working sandwich generation women was considered to be a desirable and potentially achievable state, despite numerous challenges and complexities. The role balance related experiences and strategies among working sandwich generation women was thus deemed to be an important and relevant topic for investigation [8]. This chapter introduces the concept of role balance and outlines the existing literature on working sandwich generation women. This is followed by an explanation of the significance and purpose of this doctoral research project, along with an outline of the thesis structure.

ROLE BALANCE

Life balance as a concept has been of central interest to occupational therapists since the discipline was initially founded, and has been labelled and conceptualised in many ways during this time [11-16]. Conceptualising life balance using the three overlapping approaches of occupational balance, needs balance and role balance (Figure 1.1) captures the relationship between a wide range of related concepts [11,15,17-21]. Occupational balance approaches focus on achieving the best combination of activities through balancing the interplay between intrinsic features of activities, activity types or time use [15]. Needs balance approaches draw attention to meeting psychological needs, with the goal of utilising activity participation

to balance health, relationship, identity and challenge related needs [19-22]. Role balance is highlighted in Figure 1.1 as it is the chosen approach for exploring life balance in this thesis, and hence this concept will be expanded further.

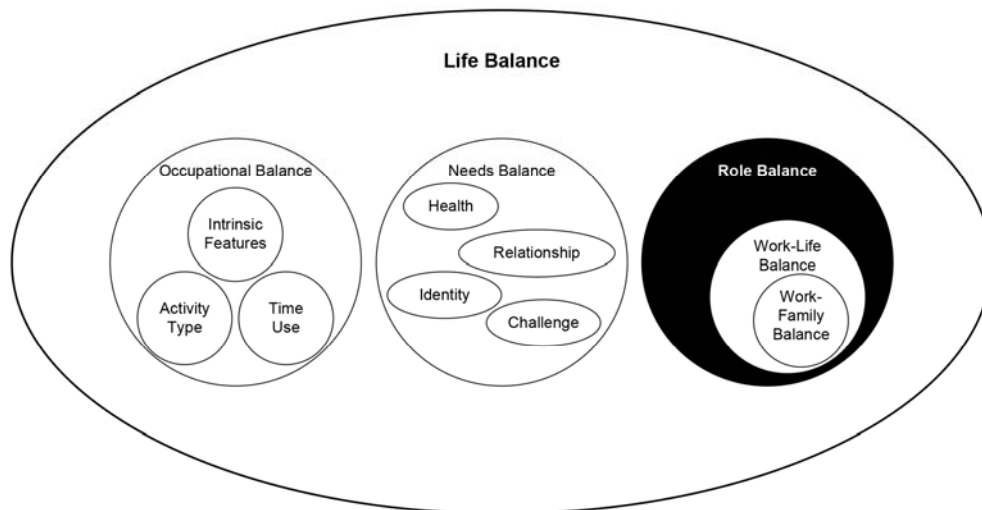


Figure 1.1. Role balance as the core topic within this research project, positioned in relation to other approaches to studying life balance.

Although role balance has only been mentioned by a small number of occupational therapy researchers [11,12,23,24], it is the most popular perspective adopted by multidisciplinary researchers when it is considered to include work-life or work-family relationships [25-27]. Role balance approaches are either holistic or didactic in nature. Holistic role balance approaches examine a full range of life domains or roles held by an individual [28,29]. In contrast, didactic role balance approaches position two life domains or roles in opposition, such as work versus life or family. Role balance approaches can also be categorised according to their focus on within roles or between roles [29]. Within, or intra, role balance approaches focus on a specific role [30-33] or a set of roles [34,35], where the interplay between emotional, cognitive and/or behavioural experiences within each role is of interest [29]. Between, or inter, role balance approaches focus on the interaction between roles. Between-role approaches can be further

divided on the basis of the direction and nature of interactions [29]. The direction of interactions may be specified in a single direction only [36] or be explored as a bidirectional concept [29]. The nature of interactions of interest may be positive (e.g. compensation, enhancement, enrichment, expansion, facilitation or spill-over), negative (e.g. burden, conflict, interference, overload or strain) or neutral (e.g. balance, compatibility, harmony or integration).

The PhD candidate developed the Model of Juggling Occupations through a comprehensive literature review during the initial phase of this research project. The Model of Juggling Occupations was developed as a conceptual framework to define and operationalise role balance in a clear and consistent way, whilst drawing on an occupational science perspective. The Model of Juggling Occupations [37, p. 335] defines role balance as:

“An individually perceived state where life is arranged in such a way that adequate balance between important occupations and occupational roles is achieved. Role balance is a dynamic and complex process, existing along a continuum, and is the outcome of continuous adjustments to priorities and occupations within multiple roles.”

The Model of Juggling Occupations focuses on an individual’s complete role repertoire, and considers both within-role characteristics (activity participation, values, interests, perceived competence and habits) and bidirectional between-role interactions (conflict and enrichment). Although within-role characteristics are based on the Model of Human Occupation [38], the language has been adjusted slightly to make it more accessible to audiences beyond the occupational therapy discipline. The development of the Model of Juggling Occupations is described in further detail in Chapter 2.

WORKING SANDWICH GENERATION WOMEN

Working sandwich generation women (Figure 1.2) are defined within this thesis [39] as women who are employed or self-employed on at least a part-time basis (at least 12 hours per week), with dual caring responsibilities of at least one child (aged below 18 years old) and at least one parent or parent-in-law (henceforth referred to as parents). The term ‘caring’ broadly covers providing ongoing emotional support, financial assistance and / or practical help with self-care, mobility, domestic, interpersonal, education or recreation related tasks [40,41].

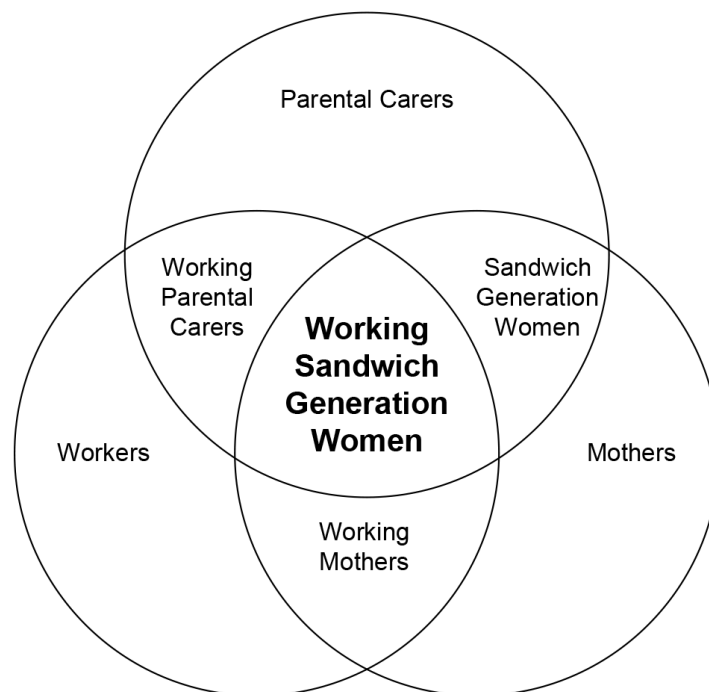


Figure 1.2. Working sandwich generation women as the core population studied in this research project, illustrated as the junction between the roles of mother, parental carer and worker.

Definitions associated with working sandwich generation women vary greatly in the literature due to different methods of operationalizing their three central roles. The role of mother is typically defined in relation to the age of the youngest child, whilst some studies focus on women with younger children [5,42], the majority include women with adolescent

[2,6,9,10] or young adult children [4,43-45]. Other studies have considered sandwich generation women as those helping adult children [46-48]. The role of parental carer is defined based on a broader range of criteria, such as providing a minimum number of hours [6,8,49] or type of care [50-52], along with parental age [53], diagnosis [9,10], relationship [42] or place of residence [4,50,54,55]. The role of worker is usually defined based on a minimum number of work hours [6,8] or a specific type of employer [2,5,56]. The final limitation that is placed on inclusion in some studies is marital status [5,6,45,49].

Occupational therapists may work directly with working sandwich generation women as clients in a variety of adult rehabilitation settings. In addition, occupational therapists work closely with mothers of clients in paediatric settings [57-62] and daughters of clients in aged care settings [63-73]. Given the female dominated profile of the occupational therapy workforce, occupational therapists are also likely to have colleagues who were working sandwich generation women. It is subsequently important for occupational therapists to have a good understanding of working sandwich generation women, as they encounter these women in numerous ways during their professional life.

However, literature that specifically reports on working sandwich generation women is limited. Some studies focused on the parental carer role contain a high proportion of sandwich generation women, however not all hold the role of mother [74-79]. Additional studies focused on mothers include sandwich generation women, however not all were parental carers [79-82]. Other studies on the sandwich generation do not distinguish findings based on the worker role [44,54,55,83-88]. Finally, many related studies do not differentiate results based on gender [53,86,89-93]. A comprehensive review of the peer reviewed and grey literature identified 20 studies, with 37 associated publications, where findings specifically reported on the intersection between being a mother, parental carer, worker and female (Table 1.1). All studies relied on populations set in North

American [3,5-10,45,56,94-112] or European cultures [3,42,49,113-119]. The majority of studies were published during the first decade of this millennium although they span the past 20 years. These studies primarily report on the prevalence of working sandwich generation women, along with their role participation, quality of life outcomes and role balance strategies.

Table 1.1

Description of Studies Reporting on Working Sandwich Generation Women

First author (year) & country	Design, data collection method & sample	Main variables (not including demographic)
Boyczuk (2016) Canada	Case study: Interview 1 married couple (WSGW n = 1)	Caregiving experiences and challenges
Buffardi (1999) USA	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 18,120 federal employees in dual-income households (WSGW n = ~207, if gender distribution equal)	Child care, elder care, work-family balance and job satisfaction
Daatland (2010) Norway	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 15,109 adults aged 18–84 years (WSGW n = not available)	Child in need (residence, age, disability status), parent in need (residence, frequency / type of assistance), employment status and QOL (affect, life satisfaction)
DePasquale (2016) USA	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 1,399 women working in nursing homes (WSGW n = 196)	Dependent care status (child, elder, sandwiched), partner support, partner strain and QOL (perceived stress, psychological distress, work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, work-to-family positive spill-over)
Duxbury (2003, 2005) Higgins (2002) Canada	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 17,364 women and 14,207 men employed by large organizations (WSGW n = 2257)	Dependent care status (no dependent care, childcare, sandwich responsibilities, eldercare), work characteristics, organizational attitudes / outcomes, family outcomes and QOL (perceived stress, burnout, depression, life satisfaction, perceived physical health, role overload, work-to-family interference, family-to-work interference, caregiver strain, work-to-family spillover)

Duxbury (2012, 2012) Canada	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 25,021 full-time employees (WSGW n = 2552 - 4954)	Lifecycle stages (no dependent care, childcare, sandwich responsibilities, eldercare), role characteristics, management of work / family role demands and QOL (work-life balance, physical health, mental health)
Evandrou (2002, 2002, 2004) United Kingdom	Longitudinal - 15y: Questionnaire >1,178 women aged 45–59 years and >1,330 men aged 45– 64 years (WSGW n > 35)	Current and past role occupancy (mother, parental carer, worker, partner) and QOL (health)
Glaser (2005) United Kingdom	Longitudinal - 6 y: Questionnaire 1844 women and 1667 men aged 55 – 69 at baseline (WSGW n = 479 over life course)	Past role occupancy (parent, parental carer, worker) and QOL (general health, functional ability, disability)
Glaser (2006) United Kingdom	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 1,250 couples with wives aged 45-59 years (WSGW n < 1)	Household composition, caregiving, employment status and QOL (frequency of participation in social activities, health)
Kunemund (2006) Germany	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 1536 women and 1541 men aged 40 - 85 years old (WSGW = ~ 26, if age range equal sample size)	Labour force participation, caring responsibilities (child / grand-child, parent / grand-parent) and QOL (life satisfaction, positive / negative affect)
Malach-Pines (2009) USA and Israel	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 315 members of the working sandwich generation living in USA, Israel or Kibbutz (WSGW n = 170)	Social support and QOL (work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, burnout)
Neal (2007, 2009) Hammer (2005, 2005, 2008) Brockwood (2002) Huang (2004) Ingersoll-Dayton (2001, 2003, 2003) USA	Longitudinal – 1 y: Focus group and questionnaire 309 (time 1) / 234 (time 2) working sandwiched couples (WSGW n = 234 - 309)	Role characteristics, role quality, coping strategies (emotional, behavioural, cognitive), workplace supports, work outcomes (job satisfaction, absence, accommodations, poor performance) and QOL (work-family-fit: bidirectional conflict and spill-over, depression, life satisfaction, overall health, overall role performance)
Pagani (2008) Italy	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 1,519 partnered mothers aged 19– 64 years old, with at least one living parent or parent-in-law (WSGW n = 166)	Employment status (including active job seekers), carer status, age of youngest child and help received from relatives (household / care duties)

Penning (1998) Canada	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 687 carers to parents and parents-in-law (WSGW = 165)	Current roles (parent, worker, spouse), parental carer role characteristics and QOL (stress, physical health, emotional health)
Pierret (2006) USA	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire Approximately 3,000 women aged 45 to 56 years old (WSGW n = not available)	Amount of assistance to living parents / parents-in-law and children (money, personal care, household chores / errands and childcare).
Remennick (1999) Israel	Grounded theory: Interviews 30 Jewish working sandwich generation women in Israel (WSGW n = 30)	Lived experience, pre-emigration background, employment history, social networks, family circumstances and care giving patterns
Rosenthal (1996) Canada	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 2,703 women and 2,412 men aged 35 – 64 years old (WSGW = ~ 95, if sample size of each age range was equal)	Role occupancy (daughter / son, parent, worker) and provision of help to parental generation (housework, transportation, personal care, financial support, outside work / household maintenance)
Schumacher (2010, 2012) USA	Hermeneutical phenomenological: Interview 6 working sandwich generation carers who have a parent with dementia (WSGW n=5)	Lived experience and time for self / leisure
Stephens (1997, 2001) Christensen (1998) USA	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 278 - 296 partnered working sandwich generation women (WSGW n = 278 - 296)	Role stress / rewards / mastery and QOL (depression, instrumental / behavioural stress, inter-role conflict, life satisfaction, optimism, physical health, leisure activity restriction)
Voydanoff (1999) USA	Cross-sectional: Questionnaire 1,342 mothers and 998 fathers of children aged 10-17 years (WSGW n = not available)	Time spent in activities (mother, parental carer, worker, spouse, home maintainer), role quality (parent, worker, spouse) and QOL (psychological distress)

Note. WSGW = Working sandwich generation women.

Prevalence

Data is not available on the number of Australian working sandwich generation women, and an accurate estimate is challenging given variability in definitions and populations utilised for available prevalence estimates. Prevalence estimates in relation to women of different age groups, along

with local population data, were utilised to calculate the estimated population of Australian working sandwich generation women at approximately 121,000 to 236,000 women [94,113,114,118,120]. Thus 3-5% of mid-adult women in Australia (aged 30-60 years old) are likely to be members of the working sandwich generation [120]. However, the estimated population of Australian working sandwich generation women was much lower (25,000 – 34,000 women or 1% of mid-adult women) when prevalence estimates based on employment sectors were utilised [2,5,121,122]. In contrast, the estimated population of Australian working sandwich generation women was much higher (429,000 – 708,000 women or 9-15% of mid-adult women) when estimates were based on women employed on a fulltime basis [8,123]. Historically, prevalence rates over the life course are much higher, with 18-26% women reporting that they had concurrently held the roles of mother, parental carer and worker at some point in their life [115,119].

There is evidence that the prevalence of working sandwich generation is increasing at a rate of approximately 2% per decade with successive cohorts [8,53,111,114,118] and is expected to continue rising due to a combination of demographic and societal factors [1,8,124,125]. The proportion of working aged adults available to care for younger and older generations is expected to decrease, which is influenced by declining fertility rates during the 1960's and 1970's resulting in fewer siblings to share parental care. This is compounded by an increased requirement for mid-adult women to become parental carers due to an ageing population. Their parents are likely to have a prolonged period of caring needs due to an increase in life expectancy and societal trends towards community based care. Whilst the fertility rate has remained stable, women are giving birth at an older age, thus are more likely to provide care to younger and older generations simultaneously. Finally, mid-adult women are projected to have higher workforce participation rates in the future [1,8,124,125].

Role Participation

Role participation among working sandwich generation women has been described in relation to objective and subjective experiences within numerous roles. The worker role is the primary subject of the majority of studies on working sandwich generation women. Sandwich generation women had lower workforce participation rates than women in general [42,98,116], although this was partly mitigated if they received childcare assistance from their parents [116]. However, longitudinal findings reported that 7% of working sandwich generation women left the workforce to concentrate on family responsibilities after one year [6]. Similarly to mothers in general, working sandwich generation women frequently worked part-time [42] or desired to reduce their work hours [8]. Some studies suggested that working sandwich generation women had reduced satisfaction with their job, managerial support and workplace flexibility compared to other working adults with family responsibilities [5,8]. Whereas other studies indicated that the interaction between their multiple roles did not impact on job satisfaction [5], and they may actually have had a more positive viewpoint of their job quality [6]. Utilising workplace entitlements and supports aimed at accommodating family responsibilities has been shown to reduce work-to-family conflict and increase job satisfaction over time [6]. Research concurs that working sandwich generation women had higher rates of absenteeism and experienced impaired job performance more frequently than other working adults due to family responsibilities [6,8,103,110]. More recent research found that working sandwich generation women were the group most likely to bring work home to finish and experienced more stress due to work extension technology, such as email [8].

Role participation findings for working sandwich generation women are also available in relation to the roles of mother, parental carer, wife and self-maintainer. As mothers, they tended to be the parent primarily responsible for childcare and more likely to make accommodations at home than their

partners, although they did receive more support with childcare from their partner than mothers without dual caring responsibilities [6,8,106]. Although working sandwich generation women spent more time caring for dependents than other women [8], they spent less time and energy caring for children than working mothers (17.5 vs. 21 hours per week) or caring for parents than female working carers (4.5 vs. 6 hours per week). However, it is possible they spent up to ten hours per week on caring tasks, which primarily consisted of assisting with instrumental activities of daily living [6]. Also in relation to the parental carer role, these women received less support from their partner with caring tasks than other working carers [110]. Most women in this group assumed the parental carer role as they felt it was their responsibility, and many perceived there was an absence of alternate informal or formal caring supports [110]. In terms of the role of wife, working sandwich generation women were more likely to be married and thus tended to have a higher family income when compared to other women [98]. This may in part explain their reduced participation in paid employment. Some research suggests that working sandwich generation women had higher partner strain than women with no family care responsibilities [2], whereas another study indicated that these women did not spend less energy in the wife role as a result of their multiple responsibilities compared to other working adults [8]. Finally, in relation to the self-maintainer role, there is a lack of consensus in the literature regarding if working sandwich generation women experience restrictions participating in self-focused activities, such as health maintenance, sleep, socialising and leisure [4,8,49]. It has been reported that working sandwich generation women tended to find strategies to re-establish leisure routines over time [9,10].

Quality of Life

The role balance related status of working sandwich generation women has been reported as relatively positive in a study of working sandwich generation husbands and wives. Findings suggested that positive family-to-

work spill-over and work-family fit were more frequent among wives than husbands, particularly when the worker and wife roles are of a high quality [6]. However, other studies suggest working sandwich generation women are less satisfied with their work-family balance [5] and experienced higher levels of role burden [4,8], conflict [2,3,6,7], interference, overload and strain [8,110] when compared to other working adults. A number of variables were associated with poor role balance related outcomes for these women, including stress, depression and leisure activity restriction [45]. Specific conflicts between roles were related to socioeconomic status and role characteristics, such as age of children and care needs of parents [45].

The physical health status of working sandwich generation women is unclear. Some studies indicate that their physical health status, in terms of general health, functional ability and disability, was similar to other women [114,115,119]. In contrast, some studies reported that working sandwich generation women feel physically unwell as a result of role stressors [4] and that these women have the poorest physical health and greatest health system utilization of all working employees [8]. Mastery across the roles of mother, parental carer, worker and wife appears to mediate the relationship between multiple role occupancy and physical health to some extent [96].

The mental health status of working sandwich generation women is also the subject of disagreement within the literature. Some studies have found these women may experience positive affect [113]. A possible explanation could be the buffering effects of role satisfaction, rewards and mastery on mental health outcomes, such as increased optimism or decreased depression and distress [95,97]. Interestingly, greater involvement in the parental carer role has also been associated with decreased depression [6,97]. Other findings suggest that being a working sandwich generation woman was not related to affect or depression [113]. In contrast, a number of studies revealed working sandwich generation women experience high levels of stress [2,8], negative affect [6], depression [6,8] and exhaustion [4]. Buffering effects also occur in relation to poor mental health outcomes,

such as increased depression and decreased optimism, when within-role stress and between-role conflict are present [95].

The wellbeing status of working sandwich generation women has been associated with the quality, mastery, rewards and stressors within roles [6,95,96]. Another study claimed that being a working sandwich generation woman was not associated with life satisfaction [113], although there is evidence to suggest that role variables, such as helping more members of the parental generation, can increase life satisfaction [6]. An aspect of wellbeing that is negatively impacted is financial security, as these women were more likely to say that their family financial resources were limited when compared to other working carers [8,110].

Role Balance Strategies

Strategies utilised by working sandwich generation women to cope with their multiple role demands have been studied through focus groups and longitudinal questionnaires. This resulted in the identification of 36 strategies, within a six-category taxonomy, where demands are decreased or resources are increased through behavioural, emotional or cognitive approaches [6,102,109]. Among these strategies, working sandwich generation were most likely to: prioritise activities; plan time and energy use; find humour in situations; be grateful for positive circumstances; limit self-focused activities, such as reading, leisure and exercise; assume responsibilities if no one else was available; limit volunteer work; limit social interactions; take time off work to care for family members; and experience guilt regarding inadequate time spent with people or on activities [6]. A clear gender difference emerged when role balance strategy utilisation was examined for both working sandwich generation husbands and wives. In contrast to wives, husbands protected time for self-focused and social activities. This may explain gender differences in quality of life outcomes, as decreasing behavioural demands through social withdrawal can be detrimental to a range of wellbeing outcomes [6,102]. In contrast,

some strategies resulted in durable positive quality of life outcomes, such as prioritizing, setting realistic expectations, practising gratitude, experiencing humour and seeking emotional support [6,102]. Parents and siblings were regarded as valuable sources of financial, emotional and practical support when reciprocal or shared caring arrangements were negotiated [6,107-109].

Another study described strategies that are utilised sequentially by working sandwich generation women to adapt to their multiple responsibilities [9,10]. A six-step process to restore balance was described as a progression from feeling unbalanced within multiple roles to accepting extensive responsibilities, shifting perceptions of time, enlisting support for self-care, taking control of time and finally re-establishing leisure routines. Re-establishing leisure routines was perceived as facilitating quality of life outcomes due to the stress-relieving and health promoting nature of many of these leisure activities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Many women combine the roles of mother, parental carer and worker, and the prevalence of this role combination is likely to increase in the coming decades. Working sandwich generation women are potentially at high risk of role imbalance, along with associated restrictions to role participation and poor quality of life outcomes. There is evidence to suggest that role balance is a central concept that mediates between role related experiences and quality of life outcomes [45], however very few studies have investigated role balance strategies utilised by these women. Role balance among working sandwich generation women is not only an issue for these women and their families, but there are also economic implications for their employers and governments.

Despite the importance of this topic, a paucity of qualitative research means that relatively little is known about the role balance experiences of these

women. Furthermore, there have been no research studies published on Australian working sandwich generation women. Although their experiences may be similar in many ways to North American and European women, differences in culture and government entitlements are likely to create unique experiences for Australian women. These gaps in the existing literature created the opportunity for this research project to make a significant contribution through a comprehensive exploration of role balance among Australian working sandwich generation women, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

A post-positivist approach was selected as the interpretive framework underpinning this research project as it allowed theory to inform data collection and analysis, whilst still preserving the ability to explore multiple perspectives [126]. Although feminist theory may have provided a suitable approach to examining role balance given the gendered nature of this topic [126], it was decided that it was more appropriate to view this research project through an occupational science lens.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The overall aim of this research project was to explore the role balance related experiences and strategies among Australian working sandwich generation women. Specifically, the research questions were:

Stage One – Role Balance Related Experiences

1. What is the role balance status of working sandwich generation women?
2. How do working sandwich generation women experience being a mother, parental carer and worker?
3. How are within-role characteristics, such as activity participation, values, interests, perceived competence and habits, related to role balance for working sandwich generation women?

4. What are the experiences associated with combining the roles of mother, parental carer and worker at the same time?
5. How are between-role interactions, such as between-role enrichment and between-role conflict, related to role balance for working sandwich generation women?

Stage Two – Role Balance Strategies

6. What strategies are helpful for working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance?
7. What are the similarities and differences in the views of working sandwich generation women and occupational therapists in terms of the most helpful role balance strategies?

THESIS OUTLINE

Role balance among working sandwich generation women is a complex phenomena, thus a research strategy capable of unravelling this complexity was required. This thesis subsequently describes a two-staged research project (Figure 1.3), where multiple methods (Table 1.2) were utilised to explore the role balance related experiences and strategies among Australian working sandwich generation women. The first stage focused on exploring role balance experiences through a case study approach (Papers I to IV) and the second stage focused on role balance strategies (Papers V to VI). The purpose and contribution of each of the six papers is described below.

Paper I – Pilot Study

The pilot study (Chapter 2) aimed to establish the appropriateness of the Model of Juggling Occupations in exploring the complex experience of role balance amongst working women with family responsibilities, by conducting an evaluation of a case study design, where data were collected

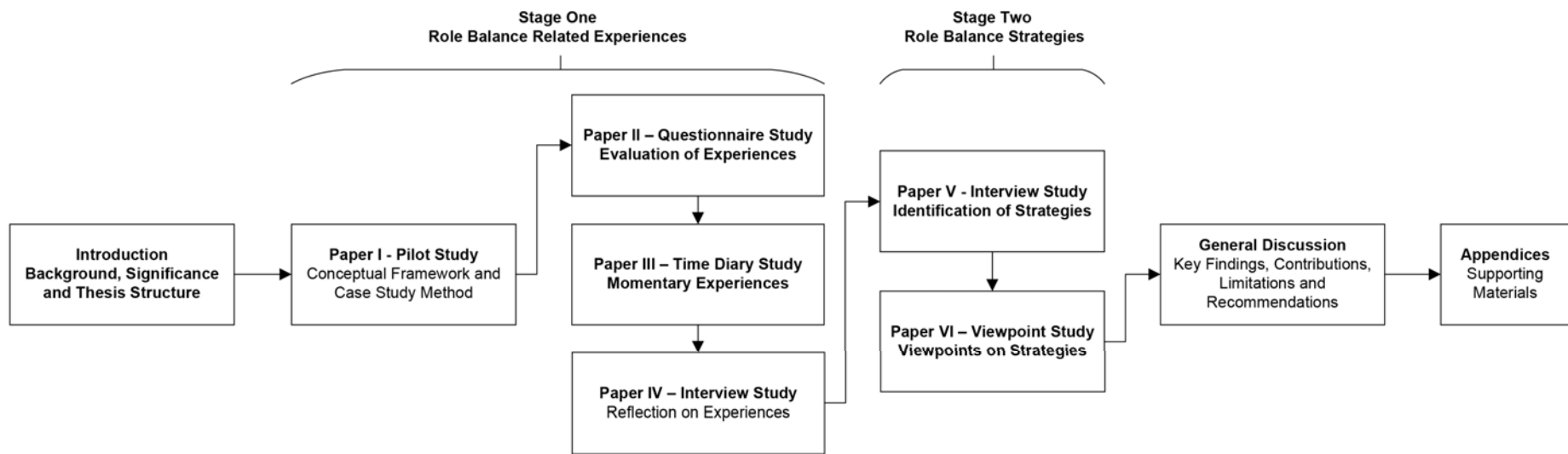


Figure 1.3. Structure of Thesis with Relationship Between Chapters

through a questionnaire, time diary and interview. Paper I contributes to the overall thesis through introducing and validating the conceptual framework developed by the PhD candidate, along with supporting the inclusion of the three data collection methods due to their unique, yet converging, findings.

Paper II – Questionnaire Study

The questionnaire study (Chapter 3) aimed to explore the relationship among within and between role experiences and role balance outcomes for working sandwich generation women during a single point in time. Paper II contributes to the overall thesis through capturing the women's global evaluations of their role balance experiences, allowing comparison with similar populations and providing a detailed understanding of interactions between specific roles.

Paper III – Time Diary Study

The time diary study (Chapter 4) aimed to explore both the objective and subjective time use among working sandwich generation women, with a focus on their momentary role balance, within-role experiences and between-role interactions. Paper III contributes to the overall thesis through highlighting the dynamic nature of momentary role balance experiences, presenting a comprehensive picture of the daily life of these women and unravelling how subjective experiences work together within roles to influence role balance.

Paper IV – Interview Study (Experiences)

The first interview study (Chapter 5) aimed to explore the experiences of role balance among working sandwich generation women, along with their within-role experiences of the mother, parental carer and worker roles and the resulting between-role interactions. Paper IV contributes to the overall

thesis through showcasing individual reflections and interpretations of role balance experiences, emphasising the complex and multifaceted nature of their role engagement.

Paper V – Interview Study (Strategies)

The second interview study (Chapter 6) aimed to obtain an initial understanding of strategies utilised by working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance. Paper V contributes to the overall thesis through in-depth identification of wide ranging proactive strategies to facilitate role balance, thus providing a basis for shifting the focus of occupational therapy researchers from theory to practice.

Paper VI – Viewpoint Study

The viewpoint study (Chapter 7), conducted using the Q methodology, aimed to identify the viewpoints on the most helpful role balance strategies for working sandwich generation women, through describing the similarities and differences in the views expressed by these women and occupational therapists. Paper VI contributes to the overall thesis through examining the relevance of the thesis topic to practising occupational therapists, contrasting personal and professional role balance advice and highlighting a range of viewpoints that require tailored service provision.

General Discussion

The general discussion (Chapter 8) provides a synthesis and discussion of findings, critical review of the contributions and limitations of the research project and outlines a series of recommendations. The general discussion contributes to the overall thesis through a proposed direction for knowledge translation to working sandwich generation women, families, organisations, practitioners, educators, governments and researchers.

Table 1.2

Summary of Research Methods for Papers

Aspect	Paper I	Paper II	Paper III	Paper IV	Paper V	Paper VI
Design	Multiple embedded case study	Cross-sectional questionnaire study	Time diary study	Interview study	Interview study	Viewpoint study
Sample	9 working women: 3 mothers, 3 parental carers and 3 sandwich generation	18 working sandwich generation women	18 working sandwich generation women	18 working sandwich generation women	18 working sandwich generation women	31 working sandwich generation women and 42 occupational therapists
Data types	Scale, ordinal, nominal and text	Scale, ordinal and nominal	Scale, ordinal, nominal and text	Text and ordinal	Text	Scale, ordinal, nominal and text
Data analysis	Non-parametric descriptive and inferential statistics Framework analysis Cross case synthesis	Non-parametric descriptive and inferential statistics Parametric descriptive and inferential statistics	Non-parametric descriptive statistics Generalised Estimating Equation	Framework analysis Non-parametric descriptive and inferential statistics	Framework analysis	Factor analysis Factor interpretation Non-parametric descriptive and inferential statistics Thematic analysis
Statistical methods	Frequency, median, range, Shapiro-Wilk test, Spearman's Rho	Frequency, median, range, mean, standard deviation, Shapiro-Wilk test, Spearman's Rho, Pearson correlation, one sample t-test and Cronbach's alpha	Frequency, median, range, Shapiro-Wilk test, odds ratio and confidence interval	Frequency, median, range, Spearman's Rho, Friedman test, Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Cronbach's alpha	Not applicable	Centroid analysis, by-person varimax rotation factor analysis, frequencies, median and range

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CHAPTER 8

GENERAL DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Approximately one quarter of women experience being part of the working sandwich generation during their lifetime [1,2] and the prevalence of this role combination is expected to increase over the coming decades [3-6]. Working sandwich generation women face additional challenges in relation to role participation [4,7-11], and they may be at higher risk of role imbalance and other poor quality of life outcomes [4,10,12-14]. In the context of a paucity of existing literature on these women, this two-staged research project successfully met the overall aim of exploring role balance related experiences and strategies among Australian working sandwich generation women. Stage One explored role balance related experiences (Papers I to IV) and Stage Two explored role balance strategies (Papers V to VI). The first section of the general discussion provides integrated conclusions to respond to the seven research questions posed during the research project. This was achieved through synthesizing key findings from the different studies, and contextualizing these discoveries in relation to how they extend and challenge the existing literature. Following these integrated conclusions for each research question, a critical review of the contributions and limitations of this research project is provided. A series of recommendations is subsequently outlined that proposes a direction for knowledge translation to working sandwich generation women, family and friends, organisations, practitioners, educators, governments and researchers. The general discussion concludes with final comments on the significant contribution this research project has made to knowledge in the field of role balance among working sandwich generation women.

ROLE BALANCE RELATED EXPERIENCES

Stage One (Figure 8.1) explored role balance experiences through the lens of the Model of Juggling Occupations. A case study approach was utilised [15], where data were collected from 18 women through a questionnaire

(Paper II), time diary (Paper III) and interview (Paper IV). The findings from Papers I to IV have been synthesised and discussed below to formulate integrated conclusions for the first five research questions. Quantitative findings for role balance, within-role characteristics and between-role interactions were available for all three data collection methods, including the interview study, as qualitative findings were quantified using three levels of role balance status and the Model of Juggling Occupations Scale (Paper IV). Summary scores (median and range) for each variable were converted to a scale from 0 to 100 to allow direct comparisons between findings from the three data collection methods and population data [16]. The Kendall's *W* coefficients of concordance statistic was calculated for each variable to investigate to what extent the findings from each data collection method were similar [17,18]. Integrated conclusions for Stage One of this research project address the working sandwich generation women's role balance status, within-role characteristics and between-role interactions, and how these two aspects influence role balance.

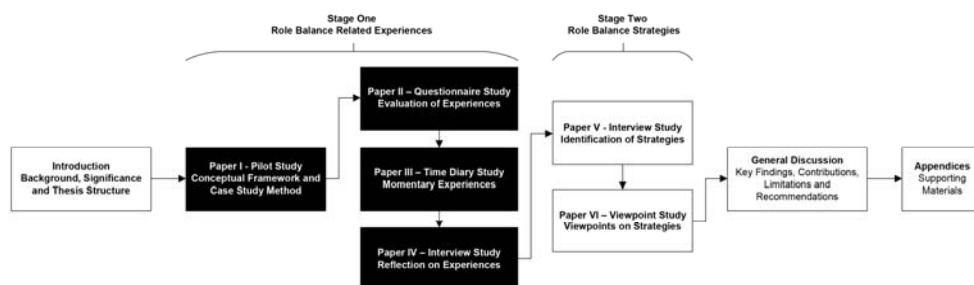


Figure 8.1. Highlighted papers illustrate the focus of Stage One.

Role Balance Status

The first research question sought to identify the role balance status of working sandwich generation women. Findings from the three data collection methods used during the case study (Papers II to IV) identified the role balance status of these women, and also revealed that role balance is a dynamic and complex concept that is related to quality of life outcomes.

Role Balance Status

When the role balance status from the questionnaire (Paper II), time diary (Paper III) and interview (Paper IV) were reviewed together (Table 8.1), it was revealed that working sandwich generation women tended to experience a moderate level of role balance overall (median = 50). This was lower than the working sandwich generation women who completed the viewpoint study (Paper VII), as they had a median 4-item Role Balance Scale score of 62 (range = 31 – 88). Although these findings show that working sandwich generation women are not flourishing in relation to their role balance, neither are they afflicted with substantial role imbalance. This supports the assertion that many working sandwich generation women are capable of achieving a baseline level of role balance, despite the multiple responsibilities and challenges that they face [13]. This provides hope that with appropriate role balance strategies and supports, women have the potential to balance the roles of mother, parental carer and worker to a satisfactory extent. Hence future interventions aimed at facilitating role balance for this population are justified.

Table 8.1

Role Balance Status – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance

Variable	Questionnaire	Time diary	Interview	Kendall's W
Role balance	50 (25 – 88)	50 (0 – 100)	50 (0 – 100)	W = .615***

*** p. ≤ .001

The role balance status of the working sandwich generation women, when measured by the 4-item Role Balance Scale (Paper II), was lower than when measurement occurred with the same instrument among similar populations of employed mothers. Mean scores on the 4-item Role Balance Scale ranged from 62 to 68 when converted to the same 100-point scale, with the midpoint situated at 62 [19-21]. This suggests that the working sandwich generation women who participated in this study experienced role

imbalance to a greater extent than other working women mothers, indicating that they should be considered a priority group for future initiatives to address role balance issues.

Role Balance as a Dynamic and Complex Concept

A broad range of role balance scores (Table 8.1) were recorded across three data collection methods (Papers II to IV), highlighting the wide variation in role balance experiences between individuals. This may explain the inconsistent findings reported in the literature regarding the role balance status of these women [4,10,12,13,22,23]. The high level of individual variation in role balance status suggests that a client-centred approach should be adopted for service delivery [24,25].

The time diary (Paper III) and interview (Paper IV) findings highlighted that individuals experienced variations in role balance over time, with fluctuations occurring on a daily and weekly basis, as well as over their life course. Previous studies have not explored the dynamic nature of role balance, and this finding supports the dynamic definition of role balance presented in the Model of Juggling Occupations. This highlights the importance of practitioners investigating role balance status through questioning individuals on their role balance experiences across time and conducting assessment on multiple occasions.

Although it was a moderate to good value [17], the Kendall's W Coefficient of Concordance (Table 8.1) demonstrated some variability remained in relation to the role balance status identified through the three data collection methods (Papers II to IV). The questionnaire (Paper II) used a composite measure, the Role Balance Scale [19], at a single point of time, capturing a global judgement of role balance. The time diary (Paper III) reported on momentary role balance experiences on repeated occasions, capturing participants perceived role balance at 30-minute increments for three days. Finally, the interviews (Paper IV) explored the women's recollections and

interpretations of their role balance experiences and overall satisfaction with their role balance status. Just as individuals evaluate their wellbeing through global judgements, momentary responses and interpreting recollections [26], the above findings suggest that role balance is a complex phenomena that is also evaluated in these multiple ways. This highlights the importance of practitioners utilising a holistic approach to assessing, addressing and reviewing role balance during service delivery.

Role Balance and Quality of Life

This study showed a relationship between role balance and quality of life outcomes among the participating working sandwich generation women. There was agreement across the three data collection methods (Papers II to IV) that role balance was associated with physical health and wellbeing, however only the interview findings (Paper IV) provided support that role balance and mental health were related.

Findings from the questionnaire and interview findings (Papers II and IV) agreed that role balance is directly related to physical health for working sandwich generation women. This relationship has not previously been clearly established in the working sandwich generation women literature, although there is evidence in the broader literature that role balance related concepts are associated with physical health [27,28]. This finding may be explained by the time diary findings (Paper III) that showed that these women spent less time participating in activities that promoted physical health, such as sleep, personal care and exercise (as a form of leisure). Other research has also found that members of the sandwich generation experience challenges participating in health promoting activities [10,29,30]. The questionnaire findings (Paper II) indicated these working sandwich generation women had a similar physical health status to women in general [31]. Although these findings are consistent with some studies on working sandwich generation women [1,2,32], they are in contrast to other studies that claim that working sandwich generation women have poorer physical

health than other populations [4]. It is possible that women with poorer physical health choose not to become working sandwich generation women, as they perceive this would be detrimental to their already fragile health. Given that better role balance is associated with higher levels of physical health, this suggests that working sandwich generation women should be supported to improve either their role balance or physical health, with the expectation that this would have a positive impact on the other outcome.

The questionnaire and interview findings (Papers II and IV) both indicated that role balance is positively associated with wellbeing for working sandwich generation women, which makes a valuable contribution to the limited literature on this relationship [27,28]. This was supported by the time diary finding (Paper III) that these women spent limited time in activities that promote wellbeing, such as sleep, personal care and leisure. The questionnaire findings (Paper II) indicated these working sandwich generation women had comparable wellbeing to older middle-aged women, however their wellbeing was lower than younger middle-aged women [33]. In contrast, their wellbeing was higher than a range of carer populations [34]. It is possible that the addition of the mother and worker roles, which were associated with high levels of enjoyment, offset the negative impact that caring can have on wellbeing. Hence, these women should be supported to maintain this diverse role repertoire.

Although the interview findings (Paper IV) revealed that the working sandwich generation women believed their role balance was connected to their mental health, the questionnaire findings (Paper II) did not support this link. This was contrary to our expectations based on previous research that established that these variables were related [27,28,35]. A possible explanation for the absence of a significant relationship between these variables is that two opposing scenarios occurred. It is feasible that some women experienced poorer mental health alongside role imbalance, whilst others experienced both good mental health and role balance (positive correlation). In contrast, for some women the cost of achieving role balance

may have been sacrificing their mental health (negative correlation). This was supported by the questionnaire finding that these women had a lower mental health status than older middle-aged women [31], and by other studies on working sandwich generation women reporting poor mental health outcomes [4,10,12].

Collectively, these findings suggest that role balance has a complicated association with quality of life outcomes. It is likely that role balance at times acts as a mediator between role experiences and quality of life outcomes [14], where these women are more likely to participate in health promoting and stress reducing activities if they feel role balanced. At the same time, they may have reduced role capacity if they are suffering from poor physical or mental health, and experience role imbalance as a consequence. Finally, it is possible that the quest for role balance may actually be associated with a high cost for working sandwich generation women in terms of their mental health. Role balance should subsequently be considered as an important concept and should be high on the agenda of organisations, practitioners, educators, governments and researchers.

Within-Role Experiences

The second research question sought to explore how working sandwich generation women experience being a mother, parental carer and worker. Findings from the three data collection methods used during the case study (Papers II to IV) revealed that the women in this study experienced challenges within each of these roles, however these were offset by the rewards associated with each role. Each role made a unique contribution to their life and was considered a worthwhile part of their role repertoire. Findings on within-role experiences are discussed below for each of the three defining roles in terms of the women's activity participation, values, interests, perceived competence and habits.

Experiences of Being a Mother

Activity participation within the role of mother occurred more frequently (Paper II) than other roles (Table 8.2), and it involved substantial multitasking (Paper III) to incorporate a multitude of practical and social tasks on a daily basis (Paper IV). This is consistent with literature describing the magnitude of activities completed by mothers as intensely demanding and relentless [36-38]. Although practical activities related to assisting children with self-care tasks decreased as their children matured [38], support with domestic tasks, homework and transport was provided to children of all ages (Paper IV). Thus, similar to other mothers, obligatory activities were a dominant feature of this role [39]. Social activities, such as demonstrating affection or encouragement, managing behaviour and participating in joint leisure activities remained a feature of mother-child relationships regardless of age, although the specific approaches varied over time (Paper IV). In addition, motherhood offered these women many opportunities to socialise with other mothers through informal friendship networks, school communities and Playgroups [40,41]. The women in this study participated in similar physical and social activities to mothers in other studies [38,42-49]. The extensive activity participation associated with motherhood places women at risk of remaining focused on doing, rather than the more enriching aspects of being and becoming [50,51]. Thus, working sandwich generation women should be encouraged to balance participation in practical and social activities within their role of mother.

The mother role was most highly valued of the three defining roles studied (Table 8.2), as highlighted in the questionnaires where all women judged this role to be very important (Paper II), and in interviews where it was described as “*always coming first*” (Paper IV [39,52]). This is consistent to the literature, where being a mother is considered intensely meaningful and a primary source of identity [38,39]. These women felt a strong sense of responsibility to support their children to be well-rounded human beings, both now and in the future (Paper IV). These aspirations are similar to other

Table 8.2

Within-role Characteristics for Mother – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance

Variable	Questionnaire	Time diary	Interview	Kendall's W
Activity participation	100 ^H (100 – 100)	22 ^{EH} (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (67 – 100)	W = .822***
Values	100 ^H (90 – 100)	75 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^E (67 – 100)	W = .886***
Interests	90 ^H (40 – 100)	50 ^{EL} (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (67 – 100)	W = .853***
Perceived competence	80 ^L (50 – 100)	75 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (33 – 100)	W = .875***
Habits	60 (20 – 90)	50 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (33 – 100)	W = .598***

Note. Rating for variable and data collection method for specific role, when compared to other two roles, are noted as follows: H = Role with highest rating. EH = Role with equal highest rating. E = All roles have equal rating. EL = Role with equal lowest rating. L = Role with lowest rating.

*** $p \leq .001$

mothers [38,46,48,49], but the magnitude of these goals can be pervasive and overwhelming [36,37,48]. Personal and societal expectations to be a “good mother”, and the associated intensive mothering ideology [36,49,52], may subsequently place excessive pressures on working sandwich generation women and these beliefs could be explored in future interventions.

Mother was rated as most enjoyable role in the questionnaire (Table 8.2), when the women provided a retrospective account of their interest (Paper II). In contrast, being a mother was associated with the equal lowest level of momentary enjoyment of the three roles in the time diary (Paper III). This contradiction may be explained by the time diary capturing the mundane nature of many of the practical activities associated with mothering, along with instances of conflict with their children. It is possible that in evaluating their experiences in the questionnaire and interview, these negative experiences lost their potency when offset against the intensity of the love and pleasure associated with this role. Paradoxical experiences related to interest within the mother role have previously been identified [37,48], although many findings are focused on enjoyable aspects [39,43,49]. These findings suggest that the women did not enjoy the momentary doing aspects

of motherhood, but enjoyed the overall experience of being a mother [50,51]. This discrepancy may stem from the dominance of practical activities within this role [39]. Given the centrality of motherhood in the lives of these working sandwich generation women, assistance to experience greater momentary enjoyment within their mother role on a day-to-day basis and to maintain perspective that fun and connection are experienced over longer time periods.

The women felt least competent in their role as mothers according to the questionnaire (Paper II) and time diary (Paper III) findings, however the interview (Paper IV) revealed a high level of confidence within this role (Table 8.2). One possible reason for this discrepancy is that the questionnaire required the women to make a global judgement of their skills in relation to their long-term goal of raising “*worthwhile adults*” and the time diary may have captured their perception of how skilfully they dealt with momentary challenges. In contrast, the interview encouraged the women to explore and reflect on their strengths and achievements within this role. Lack of confidence as mothers may have been influenced if they felt inexperienced when confronting new challenges [36,37], or did not feel in control when faced with constant worry about their children [37,44,48] and erratic routines [37,39]. It appears that working sandwich generation women may require prompting to recognise their skills and achievements as mothers. Hence, these findings highlight the importance of building supportive communities and services for working sandwich generation women [40,41,53], where a strengths-based approach is adopted to help these women to recognise and exploit their personal capabilities.

Whilst interviews (Paper IV) suggested the women were highly satisfied with how they organised their routines as mothers, the questionnaire (Paper II) indicated that they were not completely satisfied with the amount of time available to be a mother and the time diary (Paper III) revealed only moderate concentration levels during activities with their children (Table 8.2). These differences can be explained in part by the three data collection

methods measuring diverse aspects of habits. Collectively, these findings may suggest that the women were satisfied with the ‘doing’ aspects of this role in terms of arranging their routines to meet obligations, however they may have wished for more time to focus on the ‘being’ aspect of this role [50,51]. These findings suggest that working sandwich generation women may benefit from assistance to adjust their routines to allow greater opportunities to participate in social activities and concentrate on a single task within the mother role, to enhance their sense of being a mother and satisfaction with overall habits within this role.

Experiences of Being a Parental Carer

Activity participation in the parental carer role was considered less varied, productive and satisfying (Paper IV) than other roles (Table 8.3), although it involved substantial multitasking (Paper III) when they participated in this role several times per week (Paper II). The women primarily helped the parental generation with practical activities, such as domestic tasks and transport, or providing emotional support through spending time together. These activities are consistent with similar populations of parental carers [54-60]. The women in this study did not assist the parental generation with personal care activities to a great extent, hence their experiences are likely to be different from parental carers with greater responsibilities for more intensive physical caring activities within this role. It is possible this finding is due to a sampling bias, although an alternate explanation is that women may be less likely to maintain paid employment if they are juggling motherhood with substantial parental care responsibilities. Many of the women in this study did not initially identify as being a parental carer, as they considered participating in these activities as “*just part of being a daughter.*” As a consequence, these women may not realise they are eligible for carer support services due to their hidden carer status [61,62], and thus may require targeted promotion to access available support programs.

Table 8.3

Within-role Characteristics for Parental Carer – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance

Variable	Questionnaire	Time diary	Interview	Kendall's W
Activity participation	75 ^{EL} (50 – 100)	22 ^{EH} (0 – 100)	83 ^L (50 – 100)	W = .702***
Values	90 (20 – 100)	75 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^E (67 – 100)	W = .744***
Interests	65 ^L (20 – 100)	50 ^{EL} (0 – 100)	67 ^L (0 – 100)	W = .799***
Perceived competence	90 ^H (40 – 100)	75 ^E (0 – 100)	83 ^L (33 – 100)	W = .610***
Habits	50 ^L (20 – 100)	50 ^E (0 – 100)	67 ^L (33 – 100)	W = .355**

Note. Rating for variable and data collection method for specific role, when compared to other two roles, are noted as follows: H = Role with highest rating. EH = Role with equal highest rating. E = All roles have equal rating. EL = Role with equal lowest rating. L = Role with lowest rating.

*** p. ≤ .001

Being a parental carer was considered to be similarly important to the other two defining roles (Table 8.3). These women took their responsibilities very seriously, and held aspirations to maximise the quality of life of their parents for as long as possible (Paper IV). The working sandwich generation women in this study valued caring for their parents for similar reasons to other parental carer populations, such as duty, love and reciprocity [56-59]. Given that the parental carer role was valued more highly than that of worker, it is important for organisations and governments to address the potential implications on absenteeism and turnover through providing programs and entitlements to enable working sandwich generation women to maintain both their parental carer and worker roles. These programs would have substantial benefits in terms of meeting societal needs to increase both carer and labour supply, resulting in social and economic gains [4,13,53,63-65].

The parental carer was the least enjoyable of the three roles studied (Table 8.3) according to the questionnaire (Paper II) and interview (Paper IV), and was associated with an equally lowest rating in the time diary (Paper III). However, similar to other parental carer populations [56-58], many of the

women still described close friendships with their parents and valued quality time spent as an intergenerational family. As in other studies, reduced interest was typically a result of degenerative changes impacting their parent's ability to interact or experience joy, or necessitating a dependent relationship in the context of a lifelong destructive relationship [56,57,60]. A lack of enjoyment within the parental carer role may lead to feelings of burden, strain and resentment, with potential adverse mental health outcomes [66]. Hence, programs aimed at improving enjoyment within the parental carer role may have a buffering effect. These programs may focus on assisting the parental generation's capacity to participate in enjoyable activities, communicate effectively or access formal services to complete practical tasks, thus alleviating pressure on their daughters. Alternatively, programs may focus on encouraging working sandwich generation women to embed more enjoyable activities within their parental carer role and be more mindful of moments of joy or connection when interacting with their parent.

The women felt more skilled as parental carers than within their other roles (Table 8.3), when evaluated by the questionnaire (Paper II), which may have been due to the routine nature of many of the activities involved in this role. In contrast, the interviews (Paper IV) revealed the women perceived they were least confident in their role as parental carers. Reasons for this lack of confidence were similar to experiences reported in the broader carer literature, such as uncertainty regarding the future [57]. Women in this study also felt they were limited in their ability to make a difference if their parent disagreed with their suggestions, which was potentially related to power struggles associated with role reversal [57-59]. Reduced confidence within their parental carer role as their parent's health declines may lead working sandwich generation women to feel that they are not capable of sustaining this role, which could place a significant financial burden on society. Programs that facilitate increased confidence through education, skill development and counselling are supported.

The women were also least satisfied with their habits within their parental carer role (Table 8.3) according to the questionnaire (Paper II) and interview (Paper IV), as they felt they had inadequate time to dedicate to this role and were often “*on call*” to assist parents with changing needs and health crisis [56]. The parental carer role may also be associated with mundane routines and feelings of role captivity [59,60]. Accessing formal supports to undertake practical activities would allow working sandwich generation women to spend time engaged in more meaningful social activities, and is likely to improve their perceptions of time adequacy.

Experiences of Being a Worker

The women participated in activities within the worker role several times per week, during which time the time diary (Paper III) revealed they were least likely to multitask (Table 8.4). It is possible that this lack of distraction may have contributed to high levels of satisfaction and productivity in terms of their activity participation within this role (Paper IV). Although the women were employed in a wide range of vocations, there were similarities in their activity participation in terms of administrative tasks, meetings and social interactions with colleagues. Possibly due to this variation in duties, there has been very limited attention in the academic literature regarding activities that women participate in within the worker role [67]. It is possible that the worker role provides respite to working sandwich generation women, as it allows uninterrupted activity participation to a greater extent. This respite may have positive implications for their mental health, and supports the assertion that the benefits of the worker role go beyond monetary remuneration [52,56,68]. This supports to provision of programs and entitlements that allow these women to remain in the workforce.

The worker role had the lowest rating for values among the three roles (Table 8.4) when measured by the questionnaire (Paper II). A possible explanation is that many of the women had intentionally curbed their

Table 8.4

Within-role Characteristics for Worker – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance

Variable	Questionnaire	Time diary	Interview	Kendall's W
Activity participation	75 ^{EL} (75 – 100)	11 ^L (0 – 61)	100 ^{EH} (50 – 100)	W = .598***
Values	75 ^L (20 – 100)	75 ^E (25 – 100)	100 ^E (50 – 100)	W = .742***
Interests	70 (20 – 100)	75 ^H (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (33 – 100)	W = .850***
Perceived Competence	85 (50 – 100)	75 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (50 – 100)	W = .928***
Habits	70 ^H (40 – 100)	50 ^E (0 – 100)	100 ^{EH} (50 – 100)	W = .807***

Note. Rating for variable and data collection method for specific role, when compared to other two roles, are noted as follows: H = Role with highest rating. EH = Role with equal highest rating. E = All roles have equal rating. EL = Role with equal lowest rating. L = Role with lowest rating.

*** p. ≤ .001

to allow time and energy to focus on their family responsibilities, which is a phenomenon that has been identified among other women with family responsibilities [39,52,68-70]. However, the worker role was still considered very important (Paper IV) for similar reasons to those found in the literature, such as its contribution to their sense of financial security, identity and productivity [39,44,45,52,56,58,68-70]. These findings suggest that being a worker is valued highly by working sandwich generation women, and although they need to prioritise their family responsibilities during a defined point in time, it is important for them to maintain a position in the workplace in some capacity and experience opportunities to resume their career progression when their family responsibilities lessen in the future. It would be beneficial for organisations to support these women to remain employed through negotiating suitable hours and duties, and provide programs that encourage women to continue developing skills to ensure they are competitive when applying for future employment opportunities [63].

The women experienced the highest level of enjoyment within the worker role (Table 8.4) in terms of their momentary interest expressed during the time diary (Paper III). Similar to other women with family responsibilities,

the women in this study explained that being a worker was mentally stimulating, intrinsically rewarding and maintained their social connection with what they perceived to be “*the real world*” [36,52,56,68,69,71]. Given the influence of enjoyment on role balance discussed below, it is imperative that working sandwich generation women are supported to obtain and maintain employment that is compatible with their interests.

Perceived competence was the highest rated within-role characteristic for the worker role (Table 8.4) in the questionnaire (Paper II). The women expressed in the interviews (Paper IV) that this high level of confidence resulted from opportunities for autonomy and achievement of tangible outcomes [52,58,68,71,72]. Perhaps these women were most confident as workers because they were selected for this role based on their competencies, participated in professional development programs, received mentoring from senior personnel, had clear expectations regarding their performance and obtained feedback acknowledging their achievements. This presents an opportunity for practitioners to collaborate with working sandwich generation women and their families to develop similar systems for enhancing perceived competence within their family and personal focused roles.

Habits within the worker role were perceived very positively (Table 8.4), as the women reported the highest sense of time adequacy (Paper II), along with high levels of concentration (Paper III) and organised routines (Paper IV) in relation to this role. It should be noted that all women who participated in this study utilised some form of part-time or flexible working arrangement, which underpinned these positive findings [42,56,68]. Although the women acknowledged that flexibility was associated with its own challenges in terms of blurred role boundaries [4], many felt they would not have been able to maintain paid employment without these accommodations. This highlights the critical role flexible work arrangements place in supporting the workforce participation of working sandwich generation women.

Within-role Characteristics and Role Balance

The third research question sought to identify how within-role characteristics, such as activity participation, values, interests, perceived competence and habits, are related to role balance for working sandwich generation women. The findings illuminated previously invisible associations between within-role experiences and role balance at the individual item level, as well as for three types of composite scores (overall, each within-role characteristic and each role).

Findings from the three data collection methods used during the case study (Papers II to IV) revealed that apart from perceived competence within the worker role, all item level within-role characteristics for the seven roles studied were associated with role balance (Table 8.5). The qualitative findings (Paper IV) were helpful in elaborating how each of these within-role characteristics were associated with role balance related experiences. These findings support the validity of the Model of Juggling Occupations as a comprehensive conceptual model for practitioners and researchers to examine role balance in the future.

Table 8.5

Significant Associations Between Within-role Characteristic Variables and Role Balance

Variable	Mo	PC	Wo	SM	HM	FM	Fr	Composite
Activity participation	T	Q T	T	Q T	T	Q T	T	T
Values	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Interests	Q T	T	T	T	T	T	T	Q T I
Perceived competence	Q T	T		Q	Q T	T	T	Q
Habits	T	T	T	Q T	T	T	Q T	Q T
Within-role composite	Q T		T		T	Q T	T	Q T

Note. Mo = Mother. PC = Parental carer. Wo = Worker. SM = Self-maintainer. HM = Home maintainer. FM = Family member. Fr = Friend. Q = Questionnaire. T = Time Diary. I = Interview.

In addition, the overall within-role balance composite score was likewise related to role balance in the questionnaire and time diary studies (Papers II and III), although this relationship only approached significance ($p = .08$) in the interview study (Paper IV). Along with supporting the validity of the Model of Juggling Occupations, these findings also support two wellbeing theories. The “*full life*” theory suggests that wellbeing results from cumulative experiences of pleasure, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishments [73,74], which could be considered similar to the cumulative experiences of the five within-role characteristics. The “*balanced life*” theory suggests that wellbeing results from the combination of satisfying experiences across multiple roles [75,76], which could be deemed akin to the combined within-role experiences across the seven roles studied. Thus, the overall within-role balance composite score appears to capture the essence of both the “*full life*” and “*balanced life*” theories of wellbeing. These comparisons prompt researchers to consider if role balance and wellbeing are related concepts, or if perhaps they are the same concept operating under different names.

When the composite scores for within-role characteristics were examined, there was agreement across the three data collection methods (Papers II to IV) that enjoyment within roles was most strongly associated with the experience of role balance (Table 8.5). This finding is similar to the positive psychology assertion that a pleasant life contributes to wellbeing [73,74]. Two data collection methods also concurred that habits were related to role balance, in terms of perceived time adequacy for roles (Paper II) and participants’ ability to concentrate during role engagement (Paper III). There are also parallels between this finding and positive psychology theory, as leading a life characterised by absorption in activity is postulated to facilitate wellbeing [73,74]. These two findings could be related, as the women may have considered they were spending sufficient time on their roles if they were also able to include enjoyable aspects, rather than just focusing on the practical tasks that needed to be completed. In addition, they may have been more mindful in the moment if they did not feel rushed due

to time scarcity. These findings suggest that working sandwich generation women should be encouraged to include a variety of enjoyable aspects within their various roles and allow sufficient time to focus on their momentary experiences. This might be achieved by carefully reviewing their schedule to remove non-essential activities, thus creating a greater sense of time adequacy for their chosen priorities.

When the composite scores for specific roles were examined, findings from the questionnaire (Paper II) and time diary (Paper III) concurred that characteristics within the roles of mother and family member had the greatest influence on role balance outcomes (Table 8.5). The definition of family member utilised in the study meant that this role primarily focused on being a spouse, hence these findings highlight the central place that partners and children play in the experiences of role balance among these women. Spending quality time with children has been shown to improve role balance for working mothers [77]. The broader literature has also identified that spending time with a spouse has positive implications for quality of life and marital satisfaction [78,79]. However, parents are at greater risk of spending less time with their spouse when compared to non-parents, particularly if they have non-standard work hours [78-81]. As social support is well established as a protective factor for quality of life [82], working sandwich generation women should be actively encouraged to allow adequate quality time in their schedules to participate in meaningful and enjoyable activities with their children and spouse to nurture these relationships and promote role balance.

Combining Multiple Roles

The fourth research question sought to explore the experiences associated with combining the roles of mother, parental carer and worker simultaneously. Findings from the three data collection methods used during the case study (Papers II to IV) revealed both enriching and conflicting between-role interactions.

Enriching between-role interactions described by the working sandwich generation women in the interviews (Paper IV) included opportunities to capitalise on strengths, role model, seek respite, renew energy and engage in interdependent relationships. These findings are aligned with the theory of work-family enrichment, which relies on the accumulation and sharing of skills, resources and energy between roles [83]. When quantified (Table 8.6), the women were most likely to identify enriching interactions between roles when they reflected upon benefits of multiple role occupancy during the interview (Paper IV). They were least likely to distinguish between-role enrichment when asked to classify the nature of each specific interaction between two roles in the questionnaire (Paper II). Findings from the questionnaire (Paper II) and interview (Paper III) agreed that the family member, friend and self-maintainer roles had the most positive impact on other roles. Both the family member and friend roles provided working sandwich generation women with social support and connection, which are known to facilitate quality of life outcomes [74,82,84]. The self-maintainer role helped these women to maintain their capacity to continue with other roles through providing respite. Roles that provide opportunities for respite enrich other roles because they allow for energy levels to be renewed [37,42,46,49,52,54,55,69,71,85]. Being a family member, friend and self-maintainer also allowed the women to maintain their identity as a well-rounded individual, rather than being defined solely as a working sandwich generation woman. Hence working sandwich generation women should be encouraged to engage in a diverse range of roles to provide protection from negative outcomes as they experience future life transitions, such as children moving out of the family home, parents dying and retiring from paid employment [86-88].

In contrast, conflicting between-role interactions described by the working sandwich generation women in the interviews (Paper IV) resulted from the exhausting magnitude of their multiple role responsibilities, and related

Table 8.6

Between-role Interactions – Median (Range) and Coefficient of Concordance

Variable	Questionnaire	Time diary	Interview	Kendall's W
Enrichment	18 (1 – 56)	50 (0 – 98)	100 (33 – 100)	W = .598***
Conflict	83 (65 – 100)	11 (0 – 46)	33 (0 – 67)	W = .742***

*** p. ≤ .001

experiences of a rapid pace of life, time scarcity, unexpected events, incompatible schedules, negative emotional spill-over and unrealistic gender expectations to be “*superwomen*”. These experiences are consistent with findings reported by similar populations [37,42,48,49,52,54,55,60,69,71,89,90], and are aligned with the theory of work-family conflict [91], which states that time, strain and behavioural conflicts occur between roles. When quantified (Table 8.6), the women were most likely to identify conflicting interactions between roles in the questionnaire through completing the role cross-impact matrix (Paper II). Experiences of between-role conflict were least apparent in the time diary (Paper III). The questionnaire findings (Paper II) suggest that the parental carer, worker and home maintainer roles had the most negative influence on other roles. The parental carer role may have resulted in between-role conflict when it involved responding to a parent’s health crisis or when assistance was required during their usual work hours. The worker role may have resulted in between-role conflict either because their work hours lacked flexibility to accommodate other roles, or alternatively if extensive flexibility may have resulted in a lack of boundaries between roles and subsequent role imbalance [42,92-94]. In addition, the worker role is characterised by defined accountabilities to an external party and paid employment was one of the most time consuming primary activities that the women participated in during waking hours (Paper III). The most time consuming primary activity was domestic tasks, which was associated with poorer role balance outcomes (Paper III). Subsequently, the dominance of the home maintainer role may have over-whelmed these women and negatively impacted on their capacity to dedicate time and energy to other

roles. These findings suggest the importance of working sandwich generation women establishing a balance between flexibility and boundaries surrounding the roles of parental carer, worker and mother to minimise conflict with other roles.

Between-role Interactions and Role Balance

The fifth research question sought to investigate how between-role interactions, such as between-role enrichment and between-role conflict, are related to role balance for working sandwich generation women. The complex influence of between-role interactions on role balance was illuminated at the individual item and composite levels.

At the individual item level, between-role interactions involving the home maintainer and family member roles had the strongest association with role balance (Paper II). Hence, if the working sandwich generation women felt that their family member or home maintainer roles were interfering with their performance in other roles, or that their family member or home maintainer roles were suffering due to other roles, they were likely to experience role imbalance. In contrast, if their family member or home maintainer roles had a positive influence on other roles, or their family member or home maintainer roles were enhanced by other roles, they were likely to experience role balance. As with previous findings, this highlights the importance of nurturing and protecting their role as family members, primarily consisting of quality time with their children and partner. A new finding identified through this research question is that working sandwich generation women may be able to optimise their role balance through implementing strategies, such as cognitive reframing, to perceive their home maintainer role as beneficial and supportive towards other roles. Alternatively, they may be able to boost role balance through taking steps to minimise the effort spent on their home maintainer role through reducing expectations and demands, thus preventing this role from negatively impacting on other roles.

Composite scores for between-role conflict and role balance were significantly associated in the questionnaire and interview (Papers II and IV). However, between-role enrichment and role balance were only correlated with role balance in the interview study (Paper III). This supports a dual approach to maximising role balance, where working sandwich generation women should be supported to implement strategies to reduce between-role conflict and increase between-role enrichment.

ROLE BALANCE STRATEGIES

Stage Two (Figure 8.2) explored the range of role balance strategies utilised by working sandwich generation women, and how these were viewed by these women and occupational therapists. The findings from Studies V to VI have been synthesised and discussed below to formulate integrated conclusions for the final two research questions.

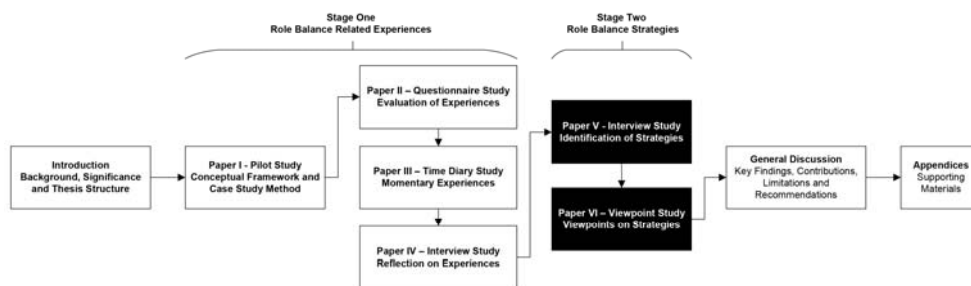


Figure 8.2. Highlighted papers illustrate the focus of Stage Two.

Relative Helpfulness of Role Balance Strategies

The sixth research question sought to identify strategies that were perceived as helpful for working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance. Interview data revealed six types of within-role strategies and six types of between-role strategies utilised by these women to achieve and maintain role balance (Paper V). These twelve strategies resulted in a total of 54 statements in the viewpoint study that described specific strategies for

enhancing role balance (Paper VI). The working sandwich generation women and occupational therapists agreed that all of the specific role balance strategies were helpful and no additional approaches were recommended. Integrating the interview and viewpoint study findings (Papers V and VI) illuminated the most helpful role balance strategies.

Within-role strategies were focused on either actively enhancing experiences or becoming more mindful of positive experiences within roles, in terms of women's values, interests and perceived competence. Ten of the 54 specific role balance strategies investigated through the Q methodology approach (Paper VI) were within-role focused (Table 8.7). Only four of the specific within-role strategies were rated as being most helpful (score ≥ 3) in at least one viewpoint in the viewpoint study. The first specific within-role strategy was *“engaging in activities that are fun or stimulating”* (part of *“doing what you love”*), which is consistent with the traditional occupational therapy approach of actively enhancing experiences through activity participation [28,95-101]. This is also supported by research on working sandwich generation women [54,55,102] and the positive psychology approach of leading a life characterised by pleasurable experiences [73,74]. The second specific within-role strategy was *“taking advantage of opportunities for personal growth, such as learning from mistakes”* (part of *“being the best you can”*), which is consistent with pursuing self-actualisation [28,95,98-101] and having a growth mindset [74]. The third specific within-role strategy was *“paying attention to activities and being mindful in the present moment”* (part of *“loving what you do”*), which has been broadly supported in the occupational therapy, working sandwich generation and broader literature [54,95,96,103,104]. The fourth specific within-role strategy was *“practicing gratitude for the good things in life”* (part of *“searching for signs of success”*), which is less prevalent within the occupational therapy [105] and sandwich generation literature [13] but commonly recommended within positive psychology [74]. These findings indicate that practitioners and educators need to ensure that they develop competencies in positive psychology approaches.

Table 8.7

Relative Helpfulness of Within-Role Strategies

Type of role balance strategy (Paper V) and associated specific role balance strategies (Paper VI)		Number of viewpoints that rate strategy ≥ 3		
		WSGW viewpoints (n = 4)	OT viewpoints (n = 4)	All viewpoints (n = 8)
Living with integrity				
27	Making progress towards aspirations, goals and dreams			
28	Meeting responsibilities, obligations and duties			
Doing what you love				
16	Engaging in activities that are fun or stimulating		1	1
25	Making every day activities more enjoyable by introducing fun or stimulating elements			
Being the best you can				
35	Putting in 100% effort during activities considered to be important			
48	Taking advantage of opportunities for personal growth, such as learning from mistakes	1		1
Remembering why				
39	Remembering why an activity or role is important			
Loving what you do				
32	Paying attention to activities and being mindful in the present moment	1		1
Searching for signs of success				
43	Searching for signs of success within a role, by recognizing small and large achievements			
33	Practicing gratitude for the good things in life	1		1

Note. WSGW = Working sandwich generation women. OT = Occupational therapists. The statement number from the viewpoint study is listed in left column is the left column.

Between-role strategies revolved around managing self, others and resources (Table 8.8). The remaining 44 of the 54 specific role balance strategies investigated through the Q methodology approach (Paper VI) were between-role focused (Table 8.8). A total of 29 between-role strategies were rated as being most helpful (score ≥ 3) in at least one viewpoint in the viewpoint study, suggesting that between-role strategies were considered substantially more beneficial in achieving role balance. Six specific between-role strategies were considered most helpful by at least half of the viewpoints. The most popular specific strategies were “*getting enough sleep*” and “*allowing enough time to relax and recover*”, which were both part of “*maintaining health and wellbeing*” [28,95,96,98-101,106-109]. Working sandwich generation women should subsequently be encouraged to sleep between seven to nine hours per night, as recommended by experts [110]. This would not only facilitate improved role performance and balance [111,112], but also have beneficial implications for mental health, physical health and safety [110-112]. Adequate time for rest is also critical to facilitate role balance and wellbeing [113], and allow working sandwich generation opportunities to mentally process challenges and plan solutions [114]. Another “*maintaining health and wellbeing*” specific strategy that was frequently recommended was “*creating opportunities for ‘me time’*”, which appears in the occupational therapy [108,109] and sandwich generation [54] literature. The next most helpful between-role strategies were “*accepting when control is not possible*” and “*maintaining realistic expectations through accepting it is not possible to ‘do it all’*”, which were both part of “*repressing perfectionism.*” Similar strategies are suggested by occupational therapists [96] and sandwich generation researchers [13], and this finding emphasises the importance of practitioners supporting working sandwich generation women to set realistic goals through challenging personal and societal expectations. Finally, “*using time efficiently and effectively*” (part of “*managing time and energy*”) was also considered very helpful by many of the viewpoints. This is supported by both occupational therapy [28,95,98-101,103,109] and sandwich generation literature [13,54,89] and supports the

Table 8.8

Relative Helpfulness of Between-Role Strategies

Type of role balance strategy (Paper V) and associated specific role balance strategies (Paper VI)		Number of viewpoints that rate strategy ≥ 3		
		WSGW Viewpoints (n = 4)	OT Viewpoints (n = 4)	All Viewpoints (n = 8)
Maintaining health and wellbeing				
2	Allowing enough time to relax and recover	3	3	6
4	Attending to general health needs	1	2	3
9	Creating boundaries so negative emotional experiences do not impact on other roles		1	1
10	Creating opportunities for "me time"	1	3	4
18	Exercising fairly regularly	1	2	3
19	Getting enough sleep	3	3	6
14	Eating and drinking in a fairly healthy way	1	2	3
36	Realizing others are experiencing similar challenges in life			
37	Realizing personal needs are equally as important as other people's needs			
41	Satisfying spiritual needs	1		1
44	Seeing the benefits or opportunities in a challenging situation			
50	Thinking positively			
52	Trying to find humour in challenging situations			
53	Using meditation techniques on a regular basis	1		1
45	Seeking emotional support from family, friends or health professionals	1	2	3
17	Ensuring sufficient variation in everyday activities			

Repressing perfectionism				
1	Accepting when control is not possible	3	2	5
24	Maintaining realistic expectations through accepting it is not possible to "do it all"	2	3	5
42	Saying no to requests without feeling guilt		1	1
46	Striving to reduce perfectionism			
Managing time and energy				
3	Allowing for some flexibility and spontaneity		1	1
5	Balancing activity levels so life feels like it is happening at a comfortable pace	1	2	3
7	Being proactive through being prepared and doing tasks in advance	3		3
12	Doing more than one activity at once if compatible	2		2
13	Doing one activity at a time if focus is needed	1	1	2
20	Having back-up systems in place in case things don't happen as expected			
21	Having plans in place regarding how to use time and energy			
22	Having systems in place to cope with busy periods	1	1	2
23	Juggling roles through quickly shifting focus back and forth between tasks			
26	Making priority choices based on the relative importance of roles and demands	1	2	3
34	Protecting and setting aside time for important priorities and activities in everyday life		1	1
40	Re-prioritizing when necessary to adapt to available time			
49	Taking advantage of small pockets of available time	2		2
54	Using time efficiently and effectively	2	2	4
Releasing responsibility				
11	Delegating tasks to family or friends		1	1
15	Encouraging children and other care recipients to be more independent			
29	Negotiating with others regarding how to share responsibilities	1	1	2
31	Outsourcing tasks to paid or government funded service providers	1	1	2

Nurturing social connection			
8	Communicating thoughts and feelings with others	2	3
30	Nurturing relationships with surrounding people	1	1
Reciprocating			
6	Balancing giving and receiving in relationships	1	2
38	Recognizing the value of roles in teaching skills or values to others through role modelling		
47	Supporting and helping others		
51	Transferring skills or strengths developed in one role into other roles		

Note. WSGW = Working sandwich generation women. OT = Occupational therapists. The statement number from the viewpoint study is listed in left column is the left column.

inclusion of prioritising, scheduling and time saving tips as topics in future interventions.

Contrasting Viewpoints on Role Balance Strategies

The seventh research question sought to explore similarities and differences in the views of working sandwich generation women and occupational therapists in terms of the most helpful role balance strategies. Similarities and differences are discussed in turn, along with implications for practitioners.

There were similarities between the viewpoints, with each of the working sandwich generation women viewpoints aligning with an occupational therapist viewpoint (Table 8.9). Through examining these similarities, the four broad approaches for working sandwich generation women to achieve role balance were letting go, slowing down, staying strong and getting things done (Table 8.9). Working sandwich generation women may have a preferred approach to pursuing role balance, and interventions should assist these women to further strengthen their knowledge and skills within this viewpoint. This may best be achieved through group interventions where women have the opportunity to share their expertise with others who have the same preferred approach. In addition, a group-based program would enable women to vicariously learn about alternative approaches to achieving role balance from peers who feel passionately about the benefits of their preferred viewpoint [115]. Occupational therapists also hold different viewpoints on the best way to achieve role balance, and it would not be practical for practitioners to be matched with working sandwich generation women who share a similar approach. Hence, it is imperative that practitioners maintain a client-centred approach to assisting working sandwich generation women to select appropriate role balance strategies through having an awareness of all approaches [24,25].

Table 8.9

Similarities Between Working Sandwich Generation Women and Occupational Therapy Viewpoints on the Most Helpful Role Balance Strategies

Common theme	WSGW viewpoint	OT viewpoint
Letting go	With help I can keep going	Releasing responsibilities should be your focus
Slowing down	With social connection I can keep going	Balancing activities should be your focus
Staying strong	With good health I can keep going	Managing emotions should be your focus
Getting things done	With time management I can keep going	Achieving priorities should be your focus

Note. WSGW = Working sandwich generation women. OT = Occupational therapists.

In terms of differences, working sandwich generation women viewpoints (Table 8.7 and 8.8) more frequently gave higher ratings to specific role balance strategies related to spirituality, positive psychology (e.g., growth mindset, mindfulness, gratitude, acceptance, meditation and strengthening relationships through communication and nurturing) and managing a busy lifestyle (e.g., being proactive, overlapping tasks and using small pockets of time). In contrast, occupational therapy viewpoints (Table 8.7 and 8.8) more frequently had higher ratings for specific role balance strategies related to engaging in rewarding or health promoting activities (e.g., fun or stimulating activities, "me time", general health needs, nutritious diet and exercise) and reducing activity levels through setting boundaries (e.g. emotionally, saying no and having realistic expectations), seeking help (e.g. emotional support and delegating) and living a less hectic lifestyle (e.g. that is flexible, spontaneous, comfortably paced and time is protected for priorities). Occupational therapists may struggle to engage with working sandwich generation women with this focus on doing less for others and more for themselves, when these women are instead focused on strategies to help them cope with maintaining their busy lifestyle. Several steps may help practitioners to establish a collaborative relationship with working sandwich generation women, so they can share their perspectives and expertise. Firstly, practitioners would benefit from developing competence in positive

psychology approaches to use as therapeutic tools. Secondly, practitioners could utilise a coaching approach to assist working sandwich generation women to reframe their thoughts on balancing care for others and self-care, to encourage uptake of rewarding and health promoting activities [116]. Finally, practitioners could work closely with working sandwich generation women within their homes or workplaces to better understand their time management challenges [116], enabling them to establish routines that accomplish all necessary role responsibilities in a less hectic manner.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The completion of a doctoral qualification requires the candidate to generate knowledge, extend research methodologies and share findings with various communities [117]. This two-staged research project involved a comprehensive research design resulting in a significant contribution to knowledge on the phenomena of role balance related experiences and strategies among working sandwich generation women, along with broadening theoretical understandings of role balance as a concept. This thesis also makes a substantial contribution to research methods and knowledge translation in the fields of role theory and occupational therapy.

Understanding of Phenomena

This thesis achieved its purpose of making a substantial contribution to knowledge on the complex phenomena of role balance related experiences and strategies among Australian working sandwich generation women. The findings from this research project provide critical insights into the role balance status of Australian working sandwich generation women, along with the within-role characteristics and between-role interactions that influence the attainment and maintenance of role balance. Furthermore, a diverse range of role balance strategies were explored in-depth and the relative helpfulness of these strategies was identified from the perspectives of working sandwich generation women and occupational therapists. One of

the overarching themes that emerged with these findings was that the working sandwich generation women were confident in “*doing*” the activities associated with their roles, however they at times struggled with a sense of “*being*” in a single role in the moment due to conflicting demands on their attention. It is possible that the process of “*becoming*” a working sandwich generation woman relies on balancing “*doing*” and “*being*” within and between their multiple roles [50,51]. This knowledge generation was made possible through the systematic process of intertwining qualitative and quantitative findings through all stages of the research process [15,118,119]. Role balance among working sandwich generation women was explored through their reflection and evaluation of past experiences, observations in the present moment and anticipation of future rewards and challenges. The trustworthiness of this contribution was enhanced in numerous ways, including triangulation of data collection methods and samples, to ensure an accurate understanding of their role balance related experiences and strategies [120]. This thesis subsequently addresses gaps in the existing literature in relation to absence of research on working women with multigenerational caring responsibilities living in an Australian context, along with the paucity of literature that explores the lived experiences of these women and how their multiple role occupancy influences their role participation.

Theory Development

This thesis further achieved its purpose of making a significant contribution to knowledge through generating and validating a new role balance theory. The Model of Juggling Occupations was created through integrating interdisciplinary theories discussed in the literature (Paper I). The Model of Juggling Occupations was subsequently validated through the six research studies described in this thesis (Papers I to VI). This contribution is significant as this thesis integrates existing role balance theories and extends the occupational therapy discipline’s theory base.

This thesis integrated several dominant theories in the role balance related literature through creating the Model of Juggling Occupations as a uniting conceptual framework. Dominant theories include those addressing a balanced life [75,76], work-family conflict [91], work-family enrichment [83] and balance from an occupational science perspective [121]. Theoretical parallels have also been established between role balance, as described in the Model of Juggling Occupations, and wellbeing, as it has recently been conceptualised by the positive psychology movement [74-76]. Integrating these theories has helped to explain how seemingly incompatible perspectives have been previously reported in the literature, as the validation of one theory does not discredit another. Instead, these theories each represent part of a complex and multidimensional concept [122].

This thesis extended the occupational therapy discipline's theory base through systematically investigating a broad range of role balance strategies from the perspective of working sandwich generation women (Paper V and VI). Occupational therapists have traditionally viewed balance as an *"individual's perception of having the right amount of occupations and the right variation between occupations"* [123, p. 322]. However, this approach was not perceived as the most helpful perspective within the viewpoint study (Paper VI), as the statement *"ensuring sufficient variation in every day activities"* had ratings ranging from -3 to 1 among the eight viewpoints (on a scale from -5 to 5). Whilst this traditional role balance strategy was still considered an appropriate approach, other role balance strategies were considered more helpful. These other role balance strategies also fall within an occupational therapist's domain of practice, as they relate to *"the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation in roles, habits, and routines"* [25, p. S1]. Through integrating concepts and practical approaches from a variety of interdisciplinary fields, this thesis has subsequently provided a basis for occupational therapists to extend their theoretical understanding of role balance. This has been underpinned by the development of measurement tools based on the Model of Juggling Occupations and a toolkit of role balance strategies. In addition, the use of

interdisciplinary language and concepts in the Model of Juggling Occupations facilitates the extension of occupational therapy theory to a wider audience.

Research Methods

An expectation of a doctoral research project is that it will innovatively develop, adapt or implement new research methodologies [117]. The combined methodological approaches utilised in this research project makes a substantial contribution to the field as they demonstrated originality, enhanced trustworthiness and showcase independent research skills in a wide range of methods.

The first contribution this thesis makes in relation to research methods is through demonstrating originality by adapting and developing measurement tools. The questionnaire study (Paper II) involved adaptation of The Role Checklist [124] to reflect anticipated roles of working sandwich generation women. The Personal Project Analysis appraisal matrix and cross-impact matrix were also adapted to examine roles, rather than projects [125]. The time diary study (Paper III) measured a range of momentary subjective experiences, including the development of a measure for the previously unstudied concept of role balance. The development of a time diary measurement tool that allows in-depth exploration of momentary subjective experiences is unique, as this type of data generation has typically been restricted to experience sampling method studies [126], where it is only possible to speculate on how activities and subjective experiences are distributed throughout the day. Whilst the interview study (Paper IV) involved a traditional approach to data collection and qualitative data analysis, the Model of Juggling Occupations Scale (MOJO Scale) was developed through adjusting the Occupational Circumstances Assessment - Interview Rating Scale [127]. Finally, the viewpoint study (Paper VI) involved the development a Q sort containing 54 specific role balance strategies. The trustworthiness of these measures was established through

expert panels, pilot testing, reliability statistics, peer examination, reflexivity, member checking and triangulation [17,120]. The measurement tools that were adapted and developed through this research project will be available for practitioners and researchers to explore role related experiences and strategies among working sandwich generation women and other populations of interest.

The second contribution this thesis makes in relation to research methods is through measures to enhance trustworthiness by its triangulation of data methods during both stages of the research project. The first stage of this research project involved a case study approach, where data from the questionnaire, time diary and interview were aligned for role balance, within-role characteristics and between role interactions. This facilitated triangulation of data methods through qualitative and quantitative techniques. The integrated conclusions section of this chapter outlines the qualitative triangulation of findings from the three data collection methods, whilst quantitative triangulation occurred through calculating the Kendall's W coefficients of concordance statistic for each variable [17,18]. A total of ten Kendall's W values were considered good to excellent, whilst seven were considered medium to good and only one was considered fair (Tables 8.1 – 8.5, [17,18]). Thus triangulation of data methods provided support for the truth value, consistency and neutrality of the findings [120] and verified the utility of the case study approach for exploring role balance related experiences. The second stage of this research project included an interview and viewpoint study, conducted sequentially with three different samples. The subsequent qualitative triangulation of data methods and sources through techniques discussed in the integrated conclusions section confirmed the value of these two research methods for exploring role balance strategies. This provides potential adopters with greater confidence to utilise these measurement tools and findings in the future.

The third contribution this thesis makes in relation to research methods is that the two-staged research design showcased the development of independent research skills in a wide range of methods. This included skills

related to data collection, data analysis, dissemination of findings and the project management process. Data were collected through the following five research methods: comprehensive literature review, questionnaire, time diary, interview and Q sort. Data analysis techniques included qualitative approaches (framework and thematic analysis) and quantitative techniques (descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, generalised estimating equation, factor analysis and factor interpretation) utilised within specific studies and for cross case synthesis in the integrated conclusions. Thus, this doctoral research project has met its objective as an apprenticeship to develop competences an autonomous researcher [117].

Knowledge Translation

Research conducted at the doctoral level is expected to disseminate findings and new insights facilitate to various communities, including peers and other potential end users [117]. A substantial contribution to knowledge translation was achieved through following the first two steps of The Ottawa Model of Health Care Research Use process [128]. The first step of the process involves obtaining a detailed understanding of the phenomena of interest through assessing potential barriers and supports to knowledge translation, in relation to the practice environment, potential adopters and evidence-based innovation [128]. The second step of involves transfer strategies, such as diffusion, dissemination and implementation [128].

This research project was aligned with the practice environment through industry engagement with Carers Australia, the national peak body for unpaid carers. This involved collaborating with key personnel within the local branch to design the research project and obtain board approval for the studies, attending carer education sessions delivered by the local branch, advertising for participants through member distribution channels and reviewing preliminary research findings. A greater understanding of the practice environment was also obtained through listening to working sandwich generation women's accounts of related structural and social

factors during the interviews, such as government funded services, family friendly organisational policies and cultures, advocacy groups and western ideologies around work and family roles. Obtaining the perspectives from potential end users provided a context on factors that would influence future implementation of the research findings.

The two main potential adopters of the knowledge created through this research project are working sandwich generation women and occupational therapists, and data were collected from both populations. In particular, a detailed understanding of role balance related experiences and strategies was obtained from women combining paid employment with multigenerational caring responsibilities, with the Model of Juggling Occupations facilitating a thorough exploration of attitudes, knowledge, motivations, barriers and supports in relation to role balance.

Finally, the evidence-based innovation stemming from this research project is the collection of findings documented in this thesis. The potential for knowledge translation to occur was enhanced by demonstrating the credibility of research findings by describing the researcher credentials, involvement of end users throughout the research process and rigorous research procedures in a brief summary report for potential adopters (Appendix K). The likelihood of working sandwich generation women and practitioners adopting role balance strategies outlined within this thesis was also improved by concentrating on intuitive, simple, inexpensive and low risk solutions identified by actual women facing challenges associated with multiple role occupancy [128,129].

Findings from this study were diffused through verbal presentations and written documents to consumers, practitioners, educators, policy makers and researchers throughout the duration of this research study. Verbal presentations on the research findings from this research project have been delivered at two state conferences, three international congresses and two video recorded Three-Minute Thesis competitions (1402 YouTube views). Two of these verbal presentations were to occupational therapists and the

remaining three were to broader audiences. Free seminars describing the research findings will be offered to the two universities involved in this research project and organisations that assisted with study recruitment once the findings have been published in peer reviewed journals. Written documents outlining the research findings include a summary report, six manuscripts and this doctoral thesis. The four-page summary report (Appendix K) was written in layperson language and will be distributed to the study participants, Carers Australia branches, organisations that assisted with study recruitment and the general community through publication on an institutional repository. The six manuscripts were submitted to peer-reviewed journals (two published with 921 views collectively, and four under review), consisting of two occupational therapy specific and four multidisciplinary publications (including one open access journal). The final doctoral thesis will be published on the Edith Cowan University institutional repository. Diffusion also occurred to some extent through working sandwich generation women, occupational therapists and other practitioners reviewing the study advertisements and participating in the research project.

Dissemination refers to delivering tailored information to potential adopters, and this will be achieved through providing study participants and Australian carer organisations with a copy of the four-page summary report (Appendix K) and details for downloading the full doctoral thesis.

Implementation of the research findings was beyond the scope of this research project, however this thesis provides a strong foundation for practitioners to develop interventions to assist working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance. A framework for the development and implementation of future interventions is discussed in the recommendation section.

LIMITATIONS

A doctoral thesis is the culmination of a learning process where an

individual makes the transition from novice to experienced researcher. This inevitably leads to reflections on aspects of the research process that could be improved if the project were to be repeated, along with key learning that can influence future research undertakings. Limitations are discussed in relation to research design, sample, measurement tools and researcher bias.

Research Design

The first limitation of this research project in relation to the research design was its observational nature, and hence this project was limited in that it was unable to detect cause-and-effect relationships between variables [17]. It was deemed necessary to select an observational research design due to the paucity of descriptive and exploratory research on role balance among working sandwich generation women [15,17]. This gap in the literature dictated an overall research aim that focused on describing and exploring relationships between variables to provide a foundation to the hierarchy of evidence, in order to provide a basis for future experimental research designs [17,130,131].

The second limitation of this research project in relation to the research design was that the questionnaire, time diary, interview and Q sort data were all collected at a single point in time. A longitudinal approach would have been beneficial in detecting changes in role balance related experiences and strategies over time [17], along with the long term impact of combining multiple roles on role balance, wellbeing, physical health and mental health. However, in this research project a cross-sectional approach was selected to minimise participant burden due to the time commitment involved in completing three data collection methods simultaneously.

The third limitation of this research project in relation to the research design was the exclusive focus on variables associated with the Model of Juggling Occupations. Basing data collection and analysis on these variables may have restricted the findings of this research study, and a range of other

variables not examined in this study may better explain the observed variations in role balance [17]. However, this constraint was offset against the benefits of intertwining the eight chapters of this thesis with a strong conceptual framework to aid clarity, cohesiveness and confidence [132].

Sample

The first limitation of this research project in relation to the sample was the relatively small sample size of working sandwich generation women who participated in both the case study (18 women completed the questionnaire, time diary and interview) and viewpoint study (31 women). It would have been advantageous to recruit more participants, as data analysis techniques were restricted to simple inferential statistics due to limited statistical power. Although more advanced inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, would have been possible with a much larger sample size [17,18], it would not have been feasible to conduct such an in-depth exploration of the phenomena within the context of a doctoral research project. Not only would the time taken to process and analyse the data be impractical in the case of a much larger sample size, but it is highly unlikely that sufficient working sandwich generation women would have agreed to spend at least four hours completing the questionnaire, time diary and interview within a short enough duration to avoid complications due to a cohort effect [17]. As the sample sizes were adequate to achieve saturation and detect statistically significant results [17,18,118,133,134], this limitation was considered an acceptable compromise.

The second limitation of this research project in relation to the sample was that the working sandwich generation women who participated in this research project were relatively homogenous in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics. Compared to the general Australian population (Table 8.10), the working sandwich generation women who participated in this research project were more likely to be partnered, have below average individual income and work hours, yet substantially higher median family

incomes [135-139]. These findings are consistent with the existing literature on working sandwich generation women [7,8]. A possible explanation is that women with a higher earning spouse may be more readily able to work on a part-time basis to accommodate increased family responsibilities. Other differences to the general population is that participants in this research project were more likely to own their home with a mortgage, live in an affluent suburb, have a university qualification and be employed as a manager or professional [140-143]. A potential reason for the relatively high socio-demographic status of the sample is that these women may have felt more empowered or have the time capacity to volunteer for the study. An alternate hypothesis is that women with greater socioeconomic resources are more likely to choose to combine the roles of mother, parental carer and worker. It is subsequently acknowledged that the findings from this research project may not be generalizable to working sandwich generation women who are single parents, caring for a child with a disability, employed fulltime or have lower socioeconomic resources available. The high proportion of Western Australian women in the samples is due to the inclusion criteria of the case study and convenience sampling procedure employed in the viewpoint study. This may have influenced the findings of this research project, as Western Australia is subject to different economic conditions compared to other states due the dominance of the resource sector.

Table 8.10

Comparison of Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Two Samples of Working Sandwich Generation Women and the General Population

Variable	Case study (n = 18)	Viewpoint study (n = 31)	Comparison population
Median Age (Years)	44	42	
Partnered	100%	94%	59% ^a
Lives in Western Australia	100%	77%	11% ^b
Lives in metropolitan area	100%	87%	
Owned home outright	33%	23%	35% ^c
Owned home with mortgage	61%	68%	35% ^c
Median suburb ranking (IRSAD decile)	9 th	9 th	5 th ^d
Personal income (\$AUD – 1000/year)	31 – 42	38	41 – 48 ^e
Family income (\$AUD – 1000/year)	104 – 130	130	76 – 81 ^f
Holds bachelor or post-graduate degree	28%	60%	23% ^g

Median number of children <18 years	2	2	2 ^h
Median age of youngest child (Years)	12	7	
Median number of parental care recipients	2	1	
Multigenerational household	33%	19%	20% ⁱ
Median total employment (hours / week)	24	24	27 – 28 ^j
Employed as a manager or professional	50%	68%	34 – 37% ^k

^a[139]. ^b[135]. ^c[140]. ^d[141]. ^e[136]. ^f[137]. ^g[143]. ^h[144]. ⁱ[145]. ^j[138]. ^k[142].

The third limitation of this research project in relation to the sample was that a sampling bias possibly occurred during the recruitment phases where women may have been more likely to volunteer to participate if they were experiencing moderate to high levels of role balance. This may have transpired due to a higher perceived participant burden among women who were already struggling to juggle motherhood, parental care and employment. Likewise, women experiencing role imbalance may have felt they had less expertise to contribute to the study.

Measurement Tools

The first limitation of this research project in relation to the measurement tools was the absence of existing measurement tools with established psychometric properties to quantify each of the concepts in the Model of Juggling Occupations. Whilst validity (face, content and criterion-related) and reliability (inter-rater) were established for the measurement tools adapted and created for this research project, internal consistency of many within-role composite scores were found to be inadequate or poor, particularly in the questionnaire study [17]. Establishment of more advanced psychometric properties was considered beyond the scope of a doctoral research project. It is recognised that this limitation may have impacted on the truth value, applicability and consistency of the research findings documented in this thesis.

The second limitation of this research project in relation to the measurement tools was the poor to moderate internal consistency of the Role Balance Scale used in the questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = .47) and viewpoint studies (Cronbach's alpha = .61) studies [17]. This was surprising, as the

Role Balance Scale was chosen on the basis of its established internal consistency in a number of studies on similar populations. In particular, the more recent four item version of the Role Balance Scale [19] was selected for this research project as the internal consistency coefficients were higher and more uniform [median Cronbach's alpha = .68, range = .64 to .72, 19,20] than the original eight item version [146] among similar female populations [median Cronbach's alpha = .64, range = .49 to .76, 147,148-154]. Upon further investigation of the unexpectedly low reliability of the Role Balance Scale, it was discovered that internal consistency would be considered strong in both studies if the balance of effort item were removed (to a Cronbach's alpha of .82 and .78 respectively). This finding suggests that theoretical differences in role balance may be present for working sandwich generation women compared to other women, where they need to be more selective in the activities in which they apply substantial effort. In addition, criterion-related validity [17] of the Role Balance Scale was established through correlation with a single item measure of overall role balance administered in the viewpoint study ($r_{ho} = .75, p. \leq .001$).

Researcher Bias

The final limitation of this research project was in relation to potential researcher bias that may have threatened the truth value and neutrality of findings, as the researcher's role repertoire may have resulted in difficulties separating personal experiences from those of the participants [120]. The lead investigator juggled the roles of researcher, occupational therapist and working mother throughout most of the duration of this research project, including a period of belonging to the working sandwich generation. Reflexivity was utilised to minimise the risk of researcher bias, where the lead investigator continuously assessed the influence of her multiple roles on the research process through a field journal [120]. In addition, ongoing peer examination occurred with a supervision panel comprised of members with diversity in gender and life experiences [120]. This was supplemented by member checking processes and triangulation of data methods and

sources [120]. Although the lead investigators roles as a working mother and sandwich generation woman may have introduced potential researcher bias, these experiences also presented advantages to the research process. The working sandwich generation women who participated in the case study were aware that the lead investigator had a young child at the time of data collection, and it is believed this was beneficial in establishing rapport and encouraging women to share their role balance experiences from one mother to another. In addition, these life experiences enhanced the lead investigators familiarity with the phenomena under investigation and contributed to a deeper understanding of the role balance related experiences and strategies during the data analysis process [120].

RECOMMENDATIONS

Extensive knowledge on role balance related experiences and strategies among working sandwich generation women has been strategically generated and transferred throughout the project duration in order to optimise translation of these findings into practice. It is recommended that the knowledge translation process is completed by undertaking the remaining two steps of The Ottawa Model of Health Care Research Use model [128]. This involves adoption and use of the research findings to assist working sandwich generation women to achieve role balance, along with measuring the outcomes for these women and key stakeholders. These key stakeholders include the social networks surrounding these women, including their family and friends, organisations, practitioners and governments. Recommendations for educators and researchers are also include as they play an important part in the knowledge translation process (Figure 8.3).

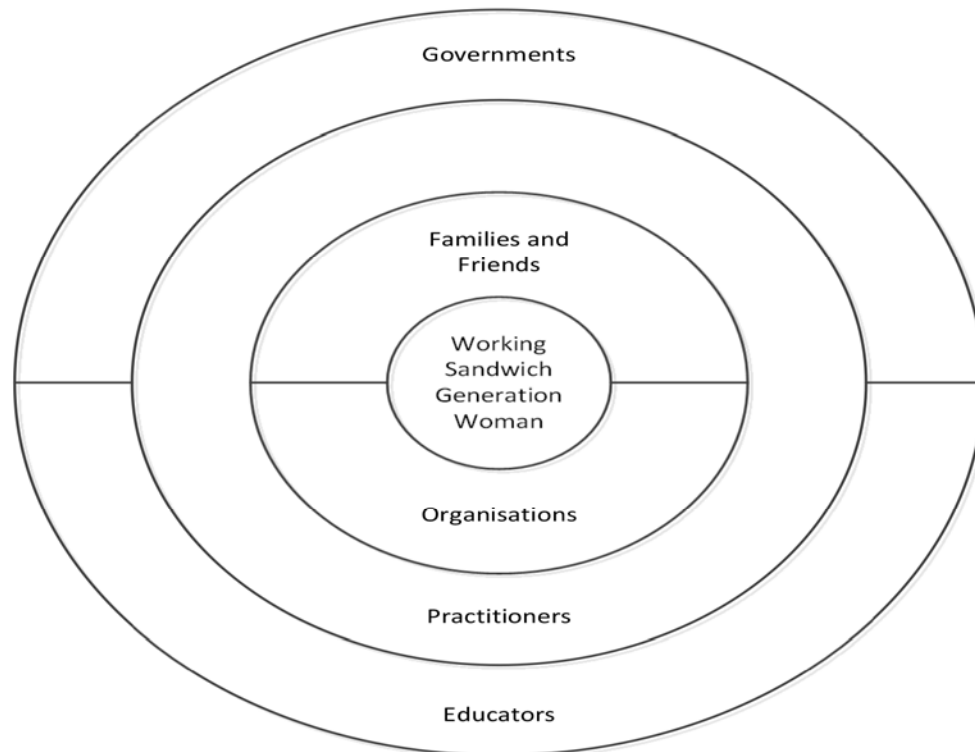


Figure 8.3. A bio-ecological description of working sandwich generation women and key stakeholders

Recommendations for Working Sandwich Generation Women

The findings from this research highlight a range of actions that if adequately empowered, individual working sandwich generation women can undertake to improve their role balance status through a personal development process. These actions include:

- Establish a core belief that their own needs and aspirations are important, and allow themselves permission to dedicate time to optimizing their role balance. In particular, this could be through adequate participation in sleep, rest, “*me time*”, fun activities and quality time with family or friends, as the benefits of these activities were clearly established in the findings. This core belief may be established through addressing components of the Health Belief Model [155]. This would involve considering the threat posed by role imbalance (in terms of the risk resulting from their multiple role

occupancy and the potential adverse quality of life outcomes), the benefits of pursuing role balance and aspects guiding their action (such as barriers, prompts and confidence to implement role balance strategies).

- Read available evidence-based resources to learn how to better balance their multiple roles. Based on this information, women can take active steps to improve their role balance in a self-directed manner through identifying challenges, recognizing strengths, setting goals, developing action plans, implementing role balance strategies and reviewing progress. Examples of available resources designed for consumers include the brief summary report based on this research project (Appendix K), Carers Australia's 'Guide for Employees Combining Work and Care' [53] and self-help books, such as 'The Gifts of Imperfection' [156] and 'The Happiness Trap' [157].
- Establish informal mutual support groups with other working sandwich generation women through local and online communities. Informal mutual support groups would provide opportunities to realise that other women are experiencing similar challenges, and share experiences, encouragement and suggestions for overcoming challenges. Along with benefits for the working sandwich generation women participating in the group, these groups are likely to result in improved quality of life and functioning for their children [158] and possibly other family members. These groups may also include a structured approach to improving role balance [158], similar to 'Happiness Project' groups [159].
- Seek informal social support from family, friends and workplaces to meet instrumental, emotional and appraisal support needs [160]. The findings from this research project suggest that informal social support may be secured through negotiating, reciprocating, delegating or promoting independence. This informal social support will facilitate working sandwich generation women shifting their focus from "*doing*" to "*being*" and "*becoming*" [50,51], and enhance their overall role

balance experiences.

- Procure formal services to meet informational, instrumental and emotional support needs [160]. Formal services may be focused on supporting working sandwich generation women directly (such as carer support agencies) or may offer assistance to their family members (for example through outsourcing domestic activities to home help providers). The findings from this study suggest that accessing these formal services may facilitate role balance and other quality of life outcomes. Formal services may be arranged through direct contact with service providers or an official referral process. These formal services will help working sandwich generation women to reduce the burden of care and enhance self-efficacy to balance their multiple roles.

Recommendations for Families and Friends

Family members include the woman's spouse (encompassing married and de facto partners within heterosexual and same sex relationships), children (including adult children residing independently in another home), parents (incorporating parents and parents-in-law who are and are not receiving care) and siblings (as well as those of their partner). Friends include the woman's closest companions and individuals with shared social groups. The findings from this research also suggest a variety of steps that family members and friends of working sandwich generation women can take to facilitate enhanced role balance among their these women. These steps include:

- Provide instrumental support [160] by taking active steps to establish shared caring and domestic arrangements with working sandwich generation women through offering assistance and negotiating the division of responsibilities. This would eliminate the need for these women to ask for help, as many of the women in this study found this challenging.

- Ensure optimal levels of personal independence to reduce reliance on working sandwich generation women. Children may assume greater responsibilities for their own care in an age appropriate manner as they mature. Parents could attend occupational therapy to increase their functional independence and recruit formal services to assist with practical tasks (when funding is available or financial resources permit).
- Recognise that working sandwich generation women are individuals with their own needs and aspirations. This can then lead to providing encouragement and instrumental support [160] for working sandwich generation women to dedicate time to meeting their own needs and pursuing their personal aspirations.
- Nurture relationships with working sandwich generation women through designating quality time together in their regular schedule, focusing on making joint routine activities more enjoyable to optimise limited opportunities for shared time, expressing appreciation and offering emotional and appraisal support [160].

Recommendations for Organisations

Organisations refer to private companies, government departments and not-for-profit organisations that employ working sandwich generation women. Peak bodies that support small-business owners may also be able to implement some of these recommendations to support self-employed women. The findings from this research provide guidance for organisations to assist working sandwich generation women to achieve adequate role balance, and thus be capable of sustaining participation in diverse roles, through addressing their employees as a whole [161]. The types of assistance include:

- Create an organisational culture that promotes role balance. The culture could be enhanced through conducting managerial training to increase

awareness and emphasise the importance of managers modelling and actively encouraging utilization of existing programs and policies within the organisation that are focused on improving role balance [13]. This organisational culture could be further improved by formally recognizing working sandwich generation women in existing and newly created policies, or by signing the ‘Carers Australia Work & Care Charter’ [162].

- Complete the Carers Australia’s ‘Work & Care Self-Assessment Tool’ [63,162], or another similar instrument, to identify the organisations strengths and weaknesses in relation to supporting employees with family responsibilities in the workplace. This could lead to the development of a formalised action plan to address identified needs [63].
- Conduct employee surveys to raise awareness and obtain feedback regarding existing policies and programs designed to assist working sandwich generation women. This survey could also seek information on challenges, unmet needs and suggested solutions among the workforce [63]. This could be supplemented by monitoring absenteeism and attrition rates, along with conducting exit interviews [63].
- Introduce policies entitling workers to flexible working arrangements, flexible leave arrangements, paid leave and workplace facilities to support women to juggle their work and family responsibilities as necessary [13,63,65]. At the same times, policies should discourage employees from working excessing overtime hours as a usual practice.
- Offer workplace supports to meet the holistic health and wellbeing needs of working sandwich generation women through corporate wellbeing programs, employee assistance programs, peer support networks and information provision [13,63,65].

- Create workforce planning policies and programs to promote women maintaining their career trajectory and minimise the occurrence of career limiting choices, such as leaving the workforce, reducing work hours, delaying career advances or changing vocations. This may include introducing career counselling services to identify suitable duties on the basis of interests, skills and family responsibilities, along with mentoring systems, professional development programs, multi-skilled workforce strategies and return to work plans [58,63,68,71].
- Carry out broad awareness campaigns to disseminate information about programs and policies aimed at working sandwich generation women to new recruits and existing employees on a regular basis [63].

Recommendations for Practitioners

Practitioners are primarily considered to be occupational therapists in the context of this thesis. This includes occupational therapists working directly with working sandwich generation women, as well as those engaged in a therapeutic relationship with the children or parents of these women. In addition, these practitioners may have a primary goal of facilitating role balance outcomes, or this may be a secondary focus in order to mitigate role imbalance as a barrier to therapeutic goals. It is also recognised that many of these recommendations may be applicable to a wide range of practitioners. These include practitioners working in organisations that support parents (e.g. community child health centres), parental carers (e.g. Carers Australia) or workers (e.g. employee assistance providers). Practitioners that assist individuals to improve quality of life outcomes may also find these recommendations relevant, such as psychologists, social workers and life coaches. Practitioners can provide a range of services during the evaluation, intervention and targeted outcomes phases of the therapeutic process [25]:

Evaluation Phase

The evaluation phase involves the practitioner gaining a greater understanding of the working sandwich generation woman's role balance related needs, through completing an initial screening assessment, followed by an individual profile and analysis of role performance if appropriate. Given that the findings from this study suggest that role balance is a dynamic, complex and multi-dimensional concept, a holistic and comprehensive evaluation process is required. Recommended actions during the evaluation phase are:

- Conduct an initial screening assessments of clients and their caregivers to determine if they are working sandwich generation women. If so, further screening should occur to determine if they are experiencing role imbalance issues that may become a barrier to therapeutic outcomes. This may involve informal questioning, prompts on an initial intake form or administering standardised measurement tools. If this screening assessment reveals that the client or caregiver is a working sandwich generation woman requiring assistance to achieve role balance, practitioners will need to determine if they will provide further evaluation and intervention services, or if they will proceed directly to the intervention phase by referring the individual to another practitioner for assistance.
- If the practitioner decides to continue with further evaluations, the next step would be to create an individual profile to further explore the individual's role balance experiences [25]. This would involve an interview to elicit information on their current: (1) role balance status; (2) role occupancy and characteristics; (3) facilitators and barriers to role balance; and (4) priorities and goals.
- This would be followed by an analysis of role performance, where the practitioner conducts formal assessments to further investigate strengths, barriers and priorities [25]. This could include administering

measurement tools, such as the Model of Juggling Occupations Scale (Paper IV), Role Balance Scale [19] and Life Participation for Parents tool [163].

Intervention Phase

The intervention phase involves the practitioner developing an intervention plan in collaboration with the working sandwich generation women, before implementing interventions [25]. Suggested considerations during the intervention phase are:

- The intervention plan should be developed at the conclusion of the evaluation phase, in collaboration with the individual to develop individualised goals and chose the most appropriate service delivery options to capitalise on strengths and address barriers [25].

The findings from this research support an intervention approach that is client / family-centred, strengths-based, holistic and lifestyle-focused:

- A client-centred approach would be suitable when working sandwich generation women are the client, as this focuses on empowering an individual to collaborate with the practitioner throughout the therapeutic process [24,25]. However, a family-centred approach may be more suitable when working sandwich generation women are the mother or daughter of the practitioners client, as this approach includes key family members as stakeholders in the therapeutic team aimed at facilitating the best possible outcomes for the individual client [24]. Family-centred practice is an approach frequently adopted by practitioners, such as occupational therapists, in paediatric [24,163-167] and aged care [60,116,168-176] settings. A family-centred approach not only facilitates more positive therapeutic outcomes for the client [24,164,165,167-169,172,173,175,176], but also has the potential to

promote improved quality of life and role performance outcomes for family members [60,116,163,165,167,168,171-176].

- A strengths-based approach would be beneficial during the intervention process to help working sandwich generation women to recognise and exploit their personal capabilities. This involves focusing on the goals, perceived competencies, signature strengths and resources of the individual and their support system, so that practitioners can assist their clients to identify successful elements and use these as a basis for further accomplishments [74,177].
- A holistic approach to the intervention process was supported by these research findings, as numerous within-role characteristics and between-role interactions identified in the Model of Juggling Occupations operated together to influence role balance outcomes (Papers I to IV). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health [178], along with occupational therapy models [25,121,179], emphasise the importance of considering an individual in terms of their personal, occupational and environmental contexts.
- A lifestyle-focused approach, such as the Redesigning Daily Occupations program for women on leave from work due to a stress related condition [96,180-185], would ensure that interventions are embedded within the everyday lives of working sandwich generation women. This would ensure that interventions are relevant, meaningful and more readily incorporated into existing habits. Interventions based on a lifestyle-focused approach are a cost-effective means to improve goal attainment, quality of life (such as physical health, mental health and life satisfaction), self-esteem, self-mastery, activity participation / satisfaction (including health promoting, social and meaningful activities) and role engagement among a range of populations [180-190].

In terms of service delivery models, practitioners need to collaborate with working sandwich generation women to decide how interventions can be

delivered. Interventions can be delivered face-to-face or remotely, individually or in groups, and facilitated or self-directed. Based on these decisions, several potential service delivery models are available to meet the needs of working sandwich generation women (Table 8.11). These service delivery models may be used in isolation or in tandem, including allowing opportunities for clients to complete self-directed activities if they are unable to attend a group session [105]. Each service delivery model has potential benefits for working sandwich generation women, depending on their preferred learning style, specific needs and lifestyle factors. It would be advantageous to offer these women a range of options for service delivery, so they can select the models that best fit with their complicated array of family responsibilities and work commitments.

Table 8.11

Matrix of Potential Service Delivery Models

Model	Face-to-face	Remote
Individual	Facilitated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person meeting 	Facilitated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone / videoconference
	Self-directed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in service at set times 	Self-directed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbook
Group	Facilitated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical closed psycho-educational group 	Facilitated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online closed psycho-educational group
	Self-directed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social group • Support group 	Self-directed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online social network • Online forum

- The first decision relates to if interventions will be provided to individuals or groups. The advantages of individual interventions are a greater capacity to for the practitioner to dedicate time to addressing the specific needs of the clients, along with the potential for conducting meetings at convenient locations, such as the working sandwich generation woman’s home or workplace. This may allow a greater number of women to participate in intervention programs. The advantages of group interventions include opportunities for vicarious learning, along with increased social support to encourage participants

to implement role balance strategies during the program and to maintain these in the future if durable friendships are formed [115]. Groups of five to ten members are generally considered ideal [191].

- The second decision relates to if interventions will be delivered face-to-face or remotely through telecommunication or online systems. The advantages of face-to-face interventions include greater ease for working sandwich generation women to develop rapport with practitioners and other participants, as well as providing more structure and potentially higher perceived accountability. Intervention attendance rates at face-to-face interventions for working sandwich generation women may be enhanced through scheduling sessions outside of business hours or providing on-site child and elder care during the group sessions. This could possibly be delivered as an intergenerational group facilitated by occupational therapists and occupational therapy students, where children and older adults work together on a joint tasks for mutual benefits. The advantages of remote interventions are greater flexibility to accommodate working sandwich generation women who experience challenges in regularly attending scheduled sessions due to work commitments and family responsibilities, along with convenience, low cost and responsiveness [192-194]. There is strong evidence that online health interventions have positive and durable outcomes, including increased knowledge, behavioural change, self-efficacy and social support [192,193,195,196].
- Finally, the third decision relates to if interventions will be facilitated by the practitioner or self-directed by the working sandwich generation woman through accessing established systems and resources. Facilitated interventions often follow a psycho-educational process and are typically more structured and goal orientated. Facilitated interventions following a psycho-educational process rely on the practitioner being a content expert and organising learning activities [191], thus an advantage of this approach is that the practitioner can base interventions on best practice in terms of evidence based treatment approaches and

learning methods. When this approach is used in a group setting, another advantage is that participants generally have a shared life experience and goal, thus group cohesion can more readily develop [191]. Self-directed individual interventions, in the form of a drop-in service or remaining “*on file*” allow practitioners to be readily accessed by working sandwich generation women as their needs change [170]. Self-directed group interventions may actually be preferred by working sandwich generation women to establish long lasting support networks [167].

Topics to be covered during interventions to assist working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance could be based on the role balance experiences and strategies identified in this research project. It has been suggested that facilitated group intervention programs using a psycho-educational or coaching method should include 6 – 26 sessions, depending on the complexity of the phenomenon, desired outcomes and available resources [105,191]. Given that these women may experience time related challenges in completing a facilitated group intervention program, a ten-week course of weekly sessions held during school term may provide enough time to address the complex topic of achieving role balance, without causing unnecessary burden for these busy women. An example schedule of topics for a ten-week course, where the structure is modelled off the Redesigning Daily Occupations program [96], is provided below (Table 8.12). In terms of the phases of group development [191], the pre-group phase has been described above in terms of the evaluation phase of the therapeutic process. The orientation phase would assist to alleviate anxiety about the upcoming intervention and allow working sandwich generation women to meet other participants in order to develop trust, discover shared experiences and create a sense of belonging. The dissatisfaction / resolution phase would involve the women exploring their current role balance status and challenges and becoming aware of the wide range of role balance strategies available. The working / production phase would include a systematic focus on learning and practicing role balance strategies. Finally, the termination / graduation phase would allow the participants to review their progress, plan for future improvements and celebrate their successes.

It is recommended that several follow-up sessions are held following completion of the facilitated ten-week course to allow continued support and monitoring [96]. These topics may also form the basis for self-directed workbooks and facilitated individual interventions, although the pace of covering topics may vary according to the needs and interests of the client.

Table 8.12

Potential Topics To Be Included In Intervention Program

Phase	Week	Topic
Pre-group	0	Individual evaluation
Orientation	1	Introduction to the concept of role balance
Dissatisfaction / resolution	2	Role balance status Overview of role balance strategies
Working / production	3	Actively enhance experiences
	4	Becoming more mindful of positive experiences
	5	Maintaining health and wellbeing
	6	Repressing perfectionism
	7	Managing time and energy
	8	Releasing responsibility
	9	Nurturing social connection and reciprocating
Termination / graduation	10	Self-evaluation Goal setting Party
	16	Follow-up session
	22	Follow-up session
	52	Follow-up session

Note. The Redesigning Daily Occupations program [96] and phases of group development [191] provided a framework for the structure of this proposed intervention program.

Suggested learning methods have been documented in a proposed intervention session template (Table 8.13), which was modelled off the Redesigning Daily Occupations program [96] and recommendations for group coaching programs [105]. Learning methods are dependent on the core objective of the intervention, which in this case is for working sandwich generation women to gain the knowledge and confidence to implement role balance strategies, with the expectation that this will lead to

Table 8.13

Example Learning Methods During a 2.5 Hour Group Session, With Alternatives For Other Service Delivery Models

Session section	Time	Facilitated face-to-face group	Facilitated online group	Facilitated individual meeting	Self-directed workbook
Group discussion	30 min.	Each participant provides feedback to the whole group on how completing assigned homework task over the past week influenced role balance.	Discussion board post	Feedback to practitioner	Reflective diary
Seminar	30 min.	Practitioner outlines background information and practical approaches related to the weekly topic, with content based on research evidence.	Recorded PowerPoint presentation	Tailored advice and handouts	Written information
Break	15 min.	Participants experience opportunity to socialise informally.	Social network section of interface	Not applicable	Not applicable
Reflective activity	30 min.	Each participant works individually to undertake a guided activity or survey to reveal a facilitator or barrier to role balance.	Complete task and summarise findings in a discussion board post	Complete as homework activity	Complete worksheets and encouraged
Interactive exercise	30 min.	Participants work together to build on insights from reflective activity through sharing experiences and expertise.	Comment on at least two other participant's posts.	Discuss with practitioner during next session	Discuss findings with a trusted friend / family member
Homework task	15 min.	Each participant articulates specific goals and determines specific actions to complete or trial over the next week.	Record in individual online plan (privacy setting available)	Developed in collaboration with practitioner	Record on weekly goal worksheet

Note. The Redesigning Daily Occupations program [96] and self-efficacy theory [115] provided a framework for the structure of this proposed intervention session.

improved role balance outcomes. Self-efficacy theory suggests this confidence can be gained through four learning methods [115]:

- Performance accomplishment as a learning method would involve working sandwich generation women gaining practical experience implementing role balance strategies within the context of their everyday life. This learning method emphasises the importance of experiencing early and repeated successes [115], hence interventions should focus on initially introducing role balance strategies that are simple and free to administer. More complex role balance strategies could be gradually introduced as the women develop competence and confidence. Performance accomplishment is the primary learning method during reflective activities and homework tasks [96,105].
- Vicarious experience as a learning method would involve working sandwich generation women acquiring confidence to attempt and persist with role balance strategies through observing other women overcoming challenges to experience success. The effectiveness of this learning method would be enhanced through early sessions focusing on group participants getting to know each other, as this would provide an opportunity to highlight similarities in their experiences [105,115]. Vicarious experience is the primary learning method during group discussions and interactive exercises, and may also be utilised in seminars through case studies [96,105] or guest speakers.
- Verbal persuasion as a learning method would involve the practitioner providing information, rationales, encouragement and feedback to working sandwich generation women in relation to their attempts to implement role balance strategies. Greater success is likely if the women perceive the practitioner to be a credible source of support [115]. Verbal persuasion is the primary learning method during seminars and when practitioners are facilitating other aspects of the proposed intervention

session plan. This could involve a coaching approach, which is based on a collaborative relationship between the client and practitioner. A range of techniques is utilised, such as reflection, self-analysis, problem solving, goal setting, education, strategy adoption, feedback and emotional support [96,197-202].

- Emotional arousal as a learning method would involve the early introduction of role balance strategies that reduce the physiological stress response to minimise avoidance behavior [115] in relation to implementing role balance strategies. Working sandwich generation women would be guided to increase their awareness of the physiological and affective experiences associated with role balance and role imbalance during the second group session. The fourth group session addresses mindfulness techniques, whilst the third and fifth group sessions involve introducing stress-relieving activities into their routine. Finally, the sixth group session would have a strong focus on mentally reframing stressful situations. Emotional arousal would be utilised as a learning method throughout seminars and homework tasks as part of the proposed intervention session plan.

Targeting Outcomes Phase

The targeting outcomes phase involves the practitioner selecting and administering outcome measurement tools, before interpreting these findings to determine the future therapeutic direction. Although targeting outcomes is listed as the last phase in the therapeutic process, these steps are also embedded in the earlier evaluation and intervention phases [25]. Hence, the measurement tools utilised during the analysis of role performance in the evaluation phase may be replicated intermittently throughout the intervention phase to monitor progress and during the targeting outcomes phase to measure the effectiveness of the intervention (immediately and six to 12 months following the conclusion of service delivery). The primary target outcome would be improved role balance for the working sandwich

generation women participating in interventions. Secondary target outcomes could include improved role participation and satisfaction, along with enhanced quality of life outcomes for these women and their families. In addition, more peripheral long-term outcomes may include economic benefits for employers and society as a whole.

Recommendations for Educators

Educators refer to the training organisations that provide practitioners with the knowledge and skills required to obtain their qualification. For the purpose of this thesis, this primarily refers to university programs that teach undergraduate and graduate entry masters students undertaking an occupational therapy degree. The findings from this research suggest educators have an important role in equipping practitioners with the ability to help working sandwich generation women to achieve role balance. The curriculum of these courses should subsequently include:

- Background information on underlying role balance theories and quality of life outcomes related to role balance.
- Evaluation approaches to identify risk factors and signs associated with role imbalance, along with administering formal role balance assessments.
- Intervention options in relation to therapeutic approaches and potential service delivery models [176], along with specific content on a wide range of role balance strategies. The findings also supported the inclusion of positive psychology tools, such as mindfulness, in occupational therapy curriculum.

- Outcome measurement tools and the program evaluation process so that practitioners can measure the effectiveness of intervention programs to enhance role balance.

Recommendations for Governments

Governments within the Australian context refer to the three levels of federal, state / territory and local governments [203], of which there are numerous departments and agencies that may be appropriate to implement recommendations to improve role balance among working sandwich generation women (Table 8.14). Governments play an important role in supporting working sandwich generation women to achieve and maintain role balance. This is not only beneficial for working sandwich generation women, but this is a valuable outcome for governments due to the economic advantages if these women are able to continue to provide informal care to family members and participate to the workforce [64,65]. Along with continuing to provide existing programs, the findings from this research project support the extension and development of additional government programs that would be beneficial in meeting the needs of working sandwich generation women. These include:

Table 8.14.

Relevant Australian Federal, State / Territory and Local Government Departments and Agencies in Relation to Role Balance Among Working Sandwich Generation Women

Level	Relevant departments and agencies
Federal	Department of Employment Department of Health Department of Human Services Department of Social Services Australian Human Rights Commission Australian Institute of Family Studies Institute of Health and Welfare Fair Work Commission National Mental Health Commission Workplace Gender Equality Agency

State / territory	Department of Commerce – Labour Relations Department of Health Department of Local Government and Communities Department of Training and Workforce Development Director of Equal Opportunities in Public Employment Health Promotion Foundation of Western Australia
Local	Positive Ageing program

Note. State / territory government examples refer to Western Australia and local government examples relate to the City of Joondalup, as these are the relevant governments for Edith Cowan University's location.

- Continue to provide an extensive range of entitlements in relation to health care, childcare, aged care and workplace relations [204-207] to support working sandwich generation women to manage multiple role demands. Within an Australian context, these include subsidised mental health treatments [204] and childcare fees [205], as well as an extensive range of programs to facilitate the parental generation remaining in their own home. These services assist older adults with personal care, domestic tasks, meals, transport, social activities, health interventions, equipment or home modifications and respite care [206]. Finally, legislation provides access to capped paid vacation leave, paid personal / carer's leave and unpaid parental leave. In addition, parents and carers have the right to request flexible working arrangements [207].
- Expand existing childcare and respite care programs to accommodate working sandwich generation women with a variety of work schedules. Childcare and aged care respite services could be made available during evenings and on weekends to allow sandwich generation women to obtain employment in shift-work positions [13]. In-home and centre-based day respite programs for older adults could be extended from the current part day structure to a long day basis, to allow working sandwich generation women to work a full eight-hour shift.
- Introduce a case managed program to assist sandwich generation women to obtain and maintain employment [208]. This could be modelled off the vocational rehabilitation process, where occupational therapists and

other allied health professionals assist individuals to establish work readiness, secure a suitable job and monitor work placement to overcome barriers to a durable employment outcome [209]. Not only would this service assist sandwich generation to access the numerous benefits associated with the worker role, but it would also meet the governments agenda of maximizing workforce participation rates among women [6].

- Introduce flexible spending accounts for working sandwich generation women [13], where eligible women are able to access a capped annual amount that can be used for services to enhance their role balance. Appropriate services would be documented in an approved role balance plan written by a qualified practitioner, such as an occupational therapist, following assessment of the individual's role balance barriers and supports. Example services may include purchasing domestic assistance, counselling sessions or fitness program memberships. A variety of funding models would be possible, ranging from user pay schemes (such as pre-tax salary sacrificing arrangements) to a fully government-funded initiative.

Recommendations for Researchers

Researchers interested in the topic of role balance among working sandwich generation women stem from a wide range of disciplines, such as occupational therapy, public health, psychology, social work, gerontology, family studies, women's studies, human resources, management and social science. The limitations of this research project present a number of opportunities for future research projects. Research topics requiring further investigation include:

- Conduct studies with an experimental research design to uncover cause-and-effect relationships between role related experiences, role balance strategies and role balance outcomes [17]. These studies could evaluate

the effectiveness of interventions, such as those recommended above, aimed at improving role balance strategy utilisation and role balance status among working sandwich generation women. This may involve an initial case series study, with role balance measured before and after the intervention, to pilot test the intervention and research procedures [17,130]. This would ideally be followed by a randomised controlled trial where the role balance outcomes of working sandwich generation women receiving the intervention are compared to those of a group of women assigned to a waiting list [17,130]. Potential outcomes include role balance strategy utilisation, along with improved role balance status and quality of life outcomes.

- Conduct longitudinal studies to investigate how the role balance status of working sandwich generation women varies over time, as role responsibilities and characteristics change. Longitudinal research designs would also be beneficial to evaluate the durability of outcomes from intervention programs, for example after three and twelve months [17].
- Examine other variables that may be related to role balance, such as antecedents (for example personal or environment factors) and outcomes (such as the quality of life concepts of physical health, mental health and wellbeing). This would also allow researchers to further investigate the theoretical alignment between the Model of Juggling Occupations and wellbeing, such as how the concept is described in the PERMA model [74].
- Recruit a larger sample of working sandwich generation women to enhance the statistical power of the research findings [17]. This may be facilitated through using briefer and more convenient data collection methods to reduce participant burden, for example online surveys that are accessible on a wide range of computers and devices. Another strategy to obtain a larger sample of these women would be to embed

relevant questions into large scale surveys that attract a high number of participants.

- Study a broader sample of working sandwich generation women to enhance the generalizability of the research findings [17]. Recruiting a sample of women with a socio-demographic profile, role characteristics and role balance status that more accurately represents the population would allow greater application of findings to other women combining the roles of mother, parental carer and worker [120,131]. The recruitment of broader samples may be facilitated through purposeful sampling or attracting participants through situating the research study within an intervention program targeted at improving their role balance.
- Establish psychometric properties of the measurement tools adapted and developed during this research project, such as the Model of Juggling Occupations Scale (Paper IV). Examples include studies to evaluate the test-retest reliability, measurement error, construct validity and cross-cultural validity of the measurement tools based on the Model of Juggling Occupations [17,210]. Practitioners and researchers will have greater confidence to utilise these measurement tools once further psychometric properties are established, thus increasing opportunities for knowledge translation.
- Further review the psychometric properties of the Role Balance Scale [19] to determine if the balance of effort item is conceptually relevant for the experience of role balance among working sandwich generation women (Papers II and VI).

FINAL COMMENTS

The role balance status of working sandwich generation women has been established as an important priority for practitioners, policy makers and researchers. This research project adds significantly to the existing body of knowledge on role balance among working sandwich generation women. The unique conceptual framework and research design adopted for this thesis made it possible to comprehensively explore how role balance is influenced by the within and between role experiences and strategies of women combining the roles of mother, parental carer and worker. Role balance amongst Australian working sandwich generation women has been identified as a desirable and achievable state, despite numerous challenges and complexities faced by these women. This was highlighted throughout this thesis and confirmed by Sophia when she described the feeling associated with a day where she was experiencing role balance as:

“I’m buzzing around. I feel good on those days. I feel like things are going well, I’m juggling... I can deal with the unexpected. I feel light. I feel in control. I’ve got a bit of air in my step, confidence. It could be a million things I’ve got to do in that day, but I feel good.”

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APPENDIX B

CONTENT OF QUESTIONNAIRE

(PAPER II)

ROLE BALANCE FOR WORKING WOMEN WITH MULTIGENERATIONAL CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

Thank you again for your help with this research. The following survey contains questions about you, your health and wellbeing, and your various life roles. The central idea that will be explored is “role balance”, which is defined in this research study as “an individually perceived state where one has arranged their life in such a way as to have an adequate balance between important activities and roles within their life”.

Please be reminded that only the investigator and her supervisors have access to this questionnaire and that your answers are completely confidential. When you complete the questionnaire, it is important to answer as truthfully as possible.

Please read the questions carefully and tick the box or write an answer that applies to you. Do not take long over your replies – your immediate reaction to each item will probably be more accurate than a long thought-out response. If you are the type of person that likes to be able to write additional notes to explain an answer, please feel free to write extra information in the margins or on an attached blank page (specifying the related question number). Additional notes will not prevent your answers to the set questions being recorded for the research study, however, please make sure you still complete all of the questions as requested. Please do not feel pressured to add any extra information if you would not like to write any additional comments.

You may complete each section of the questionnaire on separate occasions, or all of the sections at the same time. It is estimated that the questionnaire will take between 30 – 45 minutes to complete. Note that questions are used with permission.

Thank you very much for participating in this study. You will be making an invaluable contribution to a better understanding of this area.

Kiah Evans

ABOUT YOU

What is your date of birth?

- *dd-mm-yyyy*

What is the name of your suburb?

- *Free text*

What is your marital status at the present time?

- *Never married*
- *Widowed*
- *Divorced*
- *Separated but not divorced*
- *Married*
- *De facto or living together*

What is the highest qualification you have completed?

- *Did not go to school*
- *Year 8 or below*
- *Year 9 equivalent*
- *Year 10 equivalent*
- *Year 11 equivalent*
- *Year 12 equivalent*
- *Vocational certificate or diploma*
- *Bachelor degree*
- *Higher degree*

Please indicate the most appropriate description of your place of residence:

- *Owned outright*
- *Owned with a mortgage*
- *Purchasing under rent/buy scheme*
- *Being rented, Being occupied rent free*
- *Being occupied under a life tenure scheme*
- *Other, please specify (Free text)*

If you identify as belonging to a specific cultural group that you feel is related to your experience of role balance, or your roles as a worker, mother or carer, please indicate your cultural group in the space provided.

- *Free text*

What is the total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income you usually receive per year?

- \$260,000 or more
- \$208,000 - \$259,999
- \$156,000 – \$207,999
- \$130,000 - \$155,999
- \$104,000 - \$129,999
- \$83,200 - \$103,999
- \$67,600 - \$83,199
- \$52,000 - \$67,599
- \$41,600 - \$51,999
- \$31,200 - \$41,599
- \$20,800 - \$31,199
- \$13,000 - \$20,799
- \$7,800 - \$12,999
- \$1 - \$7,799

What is the total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income your family usually receives per year?

- \$260,000 or more
- \$208,000 - \$259,999
- \$156,000 – \$207,999
- \$130,000 - \$155,999
- \$104,000 - \$129,999
- \$88,400 - \$103,999
- \$72,800 - \$88,399
- \$62,400 - \$72,799
- \$52,000 - \$62,399
- \$41,600 - \$51,999
- \$33,800 - \$41,599
- \$26,000 - \$33,799
- \$18,200 - \$25,999
- \$1 - \$18,199

Feel free to add any additional comments below.

- *Free text*

About Your Health

SF-12v2© Health Survey removed as license required to reproduce. The 12 questions cover the following abbreviated content (scale):

- Moderate activity (physical functioning)
- Climb several flights (physical functioning)
- Accomplished less (role physical)
- Limited in kind (role physical)
- Pain impact (bodily pain)
- Health in general (general health)
- Lots of energy (vitality)
- Social impact II (social functioning)
- Accomplished less (role emotional)
- Did work less careful (role emotional)
- Felt calm (mental health)
- Felt down hearted (mental health)

About Your Wellbeing

The following questions ask how satisfied you feel, on a scale from zero to 10. *Zero means you feel completely dissatisfied. 10 means you feel completely satisfied. And the middle of the scale is 5, which means you feel neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.*

Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with:

- your life as a whole?
- your standard of living?
- your health?
- what you are achieving in life?
- your personal relationships?
- how safe you feel?
- feeling part of your community?
- your future security?
- your spirituality or religion?

About Your Role Balance

Thinking about your own life and circumstances, to what extent do you agree with these statements (*1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree*)?

- Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well.
- I am pretty good at keeping the different parts of my life in balance; I generally don't let things "slide".
- Work time, classes and study time, partner time, friend time, family time, leisure time – I find satisfaction in everything I do.
- I try to put a lot of myself into everything I do.

ABOUT YOUR ROLES

Role Definitions

Role	Definition
Mother	Responsibility for the care of a child (including step-children and adopted children).
Parental carer	Responsibility for the care of a parent (in-law).
Worker	Part-time or full-time employment.
Self-maintainer	Participation in caring for yourself and maintaining your health and wellbeing.
Home maintainer	Responsibility for the upkeep of the home such as housecleaning, yard work, shopping, paying bills, taking care of pets or laundry.
Family member	Spending time or doing something with a family member such as a child, spouse, or other relative.
Friend	Spending time or doing something with a friend (it can be a different friend each week).
Hobbyist	Involvement in a hobby or amateur activity such as sewing, playing a musical instrument, woodwork, sports, the theatre, or participation in a club or team.
Other care giver	Responsibility for the care of someone such as a child, spouse, relative, or friend - other than your child or parent(-in-law).
Religious participant	Involvement in groups or activities affiliated with one's religion (excluding worship).
Student	Attending school on a part-time or full time basis.
Volunteer	Donating services to a hospital, school, community, political campaign, and so forth.
Other	A role not listed which you have performed, are presently performing, and/or plan to perform.

Note. Definitions based on the Role Checklist:

Oakley F, Kielhofner G, Barris R, Klinger Reichler R (1986) The Role Checklist: Development and empirical assessment of reliability. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research* 6: 157-170.

About Your Worker Role (Repeat Questions for Each Paid Job)

Thinking again about your work, what is your position or job title?

- *Free text*

Which one of the following best describes your current type of employment for your main job?

- *Permanent or ongoing*
- *Fixed term contract*
- *Casual*
- *Self-employed*
- *Other, please specify (Free text)*

How many hours per week are you paid to work in your main job?

- *Free text*

How many hours per week on average do you actually work in your main job?

- *Free text*

Which one of the following best describes the category of your employer for your main job?

- *Federal Government*
- *State Government*
- *Local Government*
- *Education*
- *Large Private Company*
- *Small Business (< 20 staff)*
- *Self employed – sole practice*
- *Other, please specify (Free text)*

Please feel free to add any additional comments about your main job below

- *Free text*

About Your Mother Role (Repeat Questions for Each Child)

What is the age of this child at their last birthday?

- *Free text*

What is the gender of this child?

- *Male*
- *Female*

What is your relationship to this child?

- *Mother*
- *Step Mother*

Where does this child live?

- *With me 100% of the time*
- *With me 50-99% of the time*
- *With me 0-49% of the time*

Does this child have a disability?

- *No*
- *Yes, please specify (Free text)*

What type of educational institutions does this child attend?

- *Not at school yet*
- *Pre-school, please specify days/week (Free text)*
- *Primary school – Government*
- *Primary school – Catholic*
- *Primary school – Other non- government*
- *Primary school – Home school*
- *Secondary school – Government*
- *Secondary school – Catholic*
- *Secondary school – Other non-government*
- *Secondary school – Home school*
- *Tertiary institution – Technical college / TAFE*
- *Tertiary institution – University*
- *Tertiary institution – Other*
- *No longer at school – Employed*
- *No longer at school – Unemployed*

About Your Parental Carer Role (Repeat Questions for Each Potential Care Recipient)

Have you provided unpaid assistance of any kind to this person on an ongoing basis for at least 6 months?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Are you the person that provides most of the assistance?

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Not Applicable*

How long have you been providing assistance?

- *< 6 months*
- *6 months – 2 years*
- *2 years +*
- *Not applicable*

Where does this person live?

- *With me*
- *Another household*
- *Aged care facility*
- *Not applicable*

Please identify the reason this person requires care (e.g. frail aged or specify medical condition)

- *Free text*
- *Not applicable*

Do you utilise any carer support services?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Do you provide assistance with the following types tasks for the parent(s) and or parent-in-law(s) you are caring for (*Always, Sometimes or Never*)?

- Self-care (including washing, toileting, dressing, eating, drinking)
- Health maintenance (such as medications, dressings, attending appointments)
- Communication (including speaking, writing, reading)
- Interpersonal relations (including relationships, complying with social rules, regulating behaviour, emotions and aggression)
- Mobility (including changing body positions, walking, wheelchair / scooter operation, moving around at home and in the community)
- Transportation (including car, bus, taxi, train)
- Domestic life (including shopping, preparing meals, doing housework, washing / drying clothes, maintaining dwellings / vehicles / assistive devices, taking care of plants or animals, acquiring a place to live)
- Economic life and transactions (including budgeting, bills, banking, paperwork)
- Coordinating (including advocating, coordinating formal services or educating service providers / other family members)
- Community, social or civic life (including recreation, leisure, religion or community groups)
- Emotional support (including companionship, monitoring or supervising)
- Financial support (including providing money or accommodation)

About Your Within Role Experiences (Repeat Questions for Each Role Occupied)

How frequently do you participate in this role?

- *Daily*
- *Several times per week*
- *Weekly*
- *Fortnightly*
- *Monthly*
- *Quarterly*

What are the key activities involved in this role?

- *Free text*

How important is this role to you?

- *0 = Not at all important and 10 = Very important*

To what extent do you feel enjoyment while engaged in this role?

- *0 = Don't feel enjoyment at all and 10 = Feel enjoyment very strongly*

To what extent do you feel competent to carry out this role?

- *0 = Not feel competent and 10 = Feel completely competent*

How adequate is the amount of time you spend working on this role?

- *0 = Not at all adequate and 10 = Perfectly adequate*

Feel free to add any additional comments about your role as a [insert name of role] in the space below.

- *Free text*

About Your Between Role Interactions

Now for each role separately, starting with the first role on the left (e.g., student), decide whether the role will have (or is having) a positive (+), very positive (++), negative (-), very negative (- -), or neutral impact (0) on the remaining roles across the top.

Fill in each of the boxes, including those on both sides of the diagonal (the boxes crossed out)

Do the same for each of the other roles, working across one row at a time.

Remember, evaluating the impact of Role 2 on Role 3 is NOT necessarily the same as evaluating the impact of Role 3 on Role 2. That is why we want you to complete the entire matrix. Try not to leave any blank boxes.

YOUR COMMENTS ON ROLE BALANCE

1. What type of support (including emotional, practical, financial or informational support) do you currently receive that helps you to manage your role balance?
2. What type of support, that you are currently not receiving, do you feel would be helpful in managing your role balance?
3. What advice would you give to other working women caring for both their children and their ageing parent or parent-in-law, to help achieve balance between their different roles?
4. Feel free to make any additional comments about your life roles or role balance that you feel may be beneficial for this research study.

End of Questionnaire

Please return the completed questionnaire during your scheduled meeting with the researcher, or place it in the postage paid envelope provided and return to Edith Cowan University. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Kiah Evans
Occupational Therapy Program
Telephone: 6304 3653
Email: kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au

APPENDIX C

CONTENT OF TIME DIARY

(PAPER III)

What was the date this activity?

- *Free text*

What was the start time for this activity?

- *Selection to nearest 30 minutes (specify AM or PM)*

What was the finish time for this activity?

- *Selection to nearest 30 minutes (specify AM or PM)*

What was the main type of activity during this period?

- *Self-care*
- *Mobility*
- *Domestic life*
- *Assisting others*
- *Interpersonal relationships*
- *Education*
- *Work and employment*
- *Recreation and leisure*
- *Civic life*
- *Rest*

What was the main specific activity during this period?

- *Self-care*
 - *Washing, toileting, dressing etc*
 - *Eating or drinking*
 - *Managing diet and fitness*
 - *Maintaining one's health*
 - *Mobility*
 - *Walking*
 - *Driving*
 - *Using transportation*
 - *Domestic life*
 - *Acquiring a place to live*
 - *Shopping*
 - *Preparing meals*
 - *Doing housework*
 - *Making and repairing clothes*
 - *Maintaining dwellings, furnishings and domestic appliances*
 - *Maintaining vehicles*
 - *Maintaining assistive devices*
 - *Taking care of plants, indoors and outdoors*
 - *Taking care of animals*
 - *Economic life and transactions*
-

-
- *Assisting others*
 - *Assisting others with self-care*
 - *Assisting others with movement*
 - *Assisting others with communication*
 - *Assisting others with interpersonal relations*
 - *Assisting others with nutrition*
 - *Assisting others with health maintenance*

 - *Interpersonal relationships*
 - *Relationships with friends*
 - *Relationships with neighbours*
 - *Relationships with acquaintances*
 - *Relationships with parent*
 - *Relationships with child*
 - *Relationships with sibling*
 - *Relationships with extended family*
 - *Relationship with spouse (including sexual)*

 - *Education*
 - *Informal education*
 - *Vocational training*
 - *Higher education*

 - *Work and employment*
 - *Apprenticeship*
 - *Seeking employment*
 - *Paid employment*
 - *Unpaid employment (e.g. volunteer or charity work)*

 - *Recreation and leisure*
 - *Play*
 - *Sports*
 - *Arts and culture*
 - *Crafts*
 - *Hobbies*
 - *Socializing*

 - *Civic life*
 - *Informal associations (e.g. clubs)*
 - *Formal associations (e.g. professional association)*
 - *Ceremonies*
 - *Organised religious activities*
 - *Spiritual activities*
 - *Political life*
-

- *Rest*
 - *Sleep*
 - *Watching TV*
 - *Day dreaming*
 - *Doing nothing*

This activity is part of the following roles (select all applicable roles):

- *Worker*
- *Mother*
- *Parental Care Giver*
- *Care Giver (to other)*
- *Student*
- *Volunteer*
- *Home Maintainer*
- *Friend*
- *Family Member*
- *Religious Participant*
- *Hobbyist*
- *Participant in Organisations*
- *Self-maintainer*
- *Other, please specify (Free text)*

I think that I do this:

- *1 - Very well*
- *2 - Well*
- *3 - About average*
- *4 - Poorly*
- *5 - Very poorly*

For me this activity is:

- *1 - Extremely important*
- *2 - Important*
- *3 - Take it or leave it*
- *4 - Rather not do it*
- *5 - Total waste of time*

How much do you enjoy this activity?

- 1 - Like it very much
- 2 - Like it
- 3 - Neither like it nor dislike it
- 4 - Dislike it
- 5 - Strongly dislike it

Were you able to complete this activity without interruption?

- 1- Without interruption
- 2 - With minimal interruptions
- 3 - With some interruptions
- 4 - With many interruptions
- 5 - Unable to complete due to interruptions

During this activity did you feel satisfied with the balance between your different roles?

- 1 – Very satisfied
- 2 – Somewhat satisfied
- 3 – Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- 4 – Not very satisfied
- 5 – Not at all satisfied

Where were you during this activity?

- At home
- At my parent(-in-law) 's home
- At work
- At a friends home
- At a family members home
- In the car
- At a shop
- At a leisure facility
- Inside in community
- Outside in community
- Other, please specify (Free text)

Who else was present during this activity? (You can select multiple boxes)

- *I was alone*
- *With parent(-in-law)*
- *With child(ren)*
- *With spouse*
- *With pet*
- *With manager*
- *With colleague*
- *With client / customer*
- *With close friend*
- *With family member*
- *With acquaintance*
- *Other, please specify (Free text)*

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

(PAPER IV & V)

In the first section of the interview, I would like for us to talk about “role balance” in the context of your life.

Can you tell me about what the phrase “role balance” means to you?

How satisfied are you with your current role balance?

What factors in your life help you to achieve role balance?

What factors in your life get in the way of achieving role balance?

How does your current role balance impact on your health and wellbeing?

How does your current role balance impact on your different roles in life?

The following section of the interview focuses on your role as a mother.

What does this role involve?

What are the best, or most enjoyable, aspects of this role?

What are the worst, or least enjoyable, aspects of this role?

How do your habits or routines within this role impact on your role balance?

Are you satisfied with these habits and routines?

What are the most important or valuable aspects of this role for you?

How often do you experience these important or valuable aspects?

How does this impact on your role balance?

What things within this role do you feel you do well, or are proud of?

What is the biggest challenge you are currently facing within this role?

How successful do you think you will be within this role over the next six months?

How do you feel your level of confidence within this role impacts on your role balance?

Repeat above questions for parental carer role

Repeat above questions for worker role

This section looks at your experiences of being a working mother and having caring responsibilities for your ageing parent(-in-law).

What have been the positive aspects of combining these roles?

What have been the negative aspects of combining these roles?

How has having the combination of these three roles impacted on your other roles in life?

How satisfied are you with your level of participation in these other roles?

The final section of the interview allows you to make any closing comments or discuss any other ideas in more detail.

What are the main characteristics of a day where you feel a high level of role balance?

What are the main characteristics of a day where you feel a low level of role balance?

What advice would you give to other working women caring for their parents or parent-in-laws and raising children, to help achieve balance between different roles?

Is there anything else you would like to mention or share as part of this interview?

APPENDIX E

INFORMATION LETTER

AND CONSENT FORM

(PAPERS I - V)

<Participant Name>
<Street Address>
<SUBURB WA POSTCODE>

<00 Month 2010>

Dear <Participant First Name>,

My name is Kiah Evans and I am a doctoral student at Edith Cowan University (ECU). I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in my doctoral research titled “Role balance for working women with multigenerational caring responsibilities”.

This project is important because it will help to identify issues that help and hinder women maintaining role balance when they are combining work and caring for their child(ren) and parent(s). This will help to develop strategies to assist women combining these multiple roles. Participating in this study will involve three stages. The first stage is completing a written questionnaire. The second stage is keeping a time diary of your activities and experiences for three days. The final stage is attending an interview to discuss your experiences in more detail.

To commence this study, I invite you to fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the researcher during the following meeting:

Time: <0:00 am/pm>
Date: <Day 00 Month 2010>
Location: <Street Address SUBURB WA POSTCODE?>

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the researcher on 6304 3653 to make alternative arrangements. If you wish to complete the questionnaire only, please return this with the signed “Informed Consent for Participation Form” to the above postal address.

Thank you for considering participating in this important research.

Yours sincerely,

Kiah Evans

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Role Balance for Working Women with Multigenerational Caring Responsibilities

Investigator: Ms Kiah Evans
Phone: 6304 3653
Email: kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au

Who is conducting the study?

This project is conducted by Edith Cowan University (ECU). The principal investigator is Kiah Evans, a Doctor of Philosophy candidate from the School of Exercise, Biomedical and Health Sciences.

What is the aim of the study?

The primary aim of this project is to explore role balance for working women with both parental and child care responsibilities, and the resulting impacts on health and wellbeing.

Will the information I give be held in confidence?

Your responses will be confidential and no identifying information will be released to any sources, except where required by law. The information gathered from you during the questionnaire, time diary and interview will be analysed in two ways. Firstly, the information will be summarised into an individual case study, with any identifying details changed to ensure you remain anonymous. Secondly, the information will be analysed collectively with the information from all other respondents and the results will be reported as a whole. Any information about you will be recorded under a code name, you will NOT be identifiable and your name will NOT be used in any report or publication from this research. Information gained from respondents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and will be kept for 5 years according to regulations. Following this, all information will be destroyed in a secure manner. The study will be carried out in a manner conforming to the principles set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

If I consent to participate, what will happen?

You have been sent a questionnaire (enclosed with this letter), which will take approximately one hour to complete. If you agree to participate, please complete this questionnaire over the next week. You can complete the questionnaire one section at a time, or you can complete the whole questionnaire at once. It is requested that you bring the completed questionnaire and signed Informed Consent to Participate form to the initial meeting.

A convenient place, date and time has been organised for you to attend the initial meeting, which will take approximately thirty minutes. During this meeting you will be provided with instructions and materials to help you keep a time diary of your activities and experiences. You will be asked to choose three separate days that are representative of a typical week, covering days where you are involved in your worker, mother and parental carer roles. On these three days, you will be asked to record your activities and related experiences for each 30 minute period (you will only need to make one recording for activities that last longer than 30 minutes).

A second meeting time will be arranged for you to return your completed time diary, and participate in an interview with the researcher. This interview will allow you the opportunity to discuss your experiences as a working woman with dual caring responsibilities for your child(ren) and parent(s), and how this is related to your role balance. It is expected this interview will take approximately two hours. With your permission the conversation will be audio-taped and later transcribed. Emerging themes from the interview as a whole may be shared with my research supervisors to ensure sound interpretation of the data.

What if I choose to leave the study?

You are free to decide whether you will participate in this study or not. If at any time you wish not to answer a question or to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so. Your decision to participate will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you have two options regarding any information already collected. You may elect for the information you have already supplied to be destroyed. Alternatively, you can elect for the information you have already supplied to be retained for research purposes, but choose not to supply any new information.

What if I need more information?

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact the investigator (6304 3653), or her supervisors, Dr Sonya Girdler (6304 3582) and Associate Professor Jeannine Millstead (134 328) at any time. If you have concerns or complaints regarding the study, you can contact the Research Ethics Officer (6304 2170).

Are there any risks involved?

There are no risks involved in this study. However, the time commitment required to complete the study may result in you feeling increased role imbalance or stress. If this occurs, you are encouraged to take advantage of the flexible options available to complete smaller sections at a time or to contact the investigator to discuss your concerns. The investigator has training in occupational therapy, and will refer you to appropriate assistance if this is required.

Thank you for considering participating in this research project.

Kiah Evans

PhD Candidate

Dr. Sonya Girdler

Senior Lecturer

Assoc. Prof. Jeannine

Millstead Lecturer

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

I acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Information Statement explaining the research study. I have read the information and any of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am confident that I understand the information provided. I understand the possible advantages and risks involved in taking part in this study. If I have any further questions I know I can contact the Research Project's investigator or one of her supervisors.

I understand that I do not need to answer any question I do not feel confident discussing and that I may change my mind and withdraw my consent at any time without affecting me in any way.

I understand that information provided will be treated as confidential.

I agree that research data gathered for this study may be published or used at conferences for educational purposes, provided names and other information which may identify me are not used.

I understand that this signed consent form cannot and will not be linked in any way to my questionnaire, time diary or interview.

I, _____, consent to participate in this research project.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator:

Kiah Evans

PhD Candidate

6304 3653

kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au

Supervisors:

Dr Sonya Girdler

Senior Lecturer

6304 3582

s.girdler@ecu.edu.au

A/Prof Jeannine Millstead

Lecturer

134 328

j.millstead@ecu.edu.au

The Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee has given ethics approval for this study. If you wish, you will be provided with a copy of this Consent Form.

APPENDIX F

MODEL OF JUGGLING

OCCUPATIONS SCALE FORM

(PAPER IV)

Rating scale explanation	Score
F: Facilitates participation in specific role or overall role balance	4
A: Allows participation in specific role or overall role balance	3
I: Inhibits participation in specific role or overall role balance	2
R: Restricts participation in specific role or overall role balance	1

Item descriptor statements

- Activity participation
- F
- Occupations within [specify] role reflect a highly productive role
 - High level of satisfaction with current occupations within [specify] role
 - Participates in a wide range of occupations within [specify] role
- A
- Occupations within [specify] role reflect a somewhat productive role
 - Some satisfaction with current occupations within [specify] role
 - Minor difficulties in participating in a wide range of occupations within [specify] role
- I
- Occupations within [specify] role fail to meet needs of role
 - Very little satisfaction with current occupations within [specify] role
 - Major difficulties in participating in a wide range of occupations within [specify] role
- R
- No occupational participation within [specify] role
 - No satisfaction with current occupations within [specify] role
 - Unable to participate in a wide range of occupations within [specify] role
-

Values	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Identifies distinct and specific values within [specify] role○ Strong convictions about expressed values within [specify] role○ Expresses complete congruence between own values and current life situation within [specify] role
	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Identifies somewhat ambiguous values within [specify] role○ Some conviction about expressed values within [specify] role○ Expresses some congruity between own values and current life situation within [specify] role
	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Loosely identifies very ambiguous values within [specify] role○ Very little conviction about expressed values within [specify] role○ Expresses very little congruity between own values and current life situation within [specify] role
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Does not identify any values within [specify] role○ No conviction / alienation about expressed values within [specify] role○ Expresses no congruity between own values and current life situation within [specify] role

-
- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| Interests | F | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ [Specify] role contributes strongly to sense of enjoyment in life○ High level of interest in primary occupations associated with [specify] role○ High level of satisfaction with level of participation in enjoyable aspects of [specify] role |
| | A | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ [Specify] role contributes somewhat to sense of enjoyment in life○ Some interest in primary occupations associated with [specify] role○ Some satisfaction with level of participation in enjoyable aspects of [specify] role |
| | I | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ [Specify] role contributes very little to sense of enjoyment in life○ Very little interest in primary occupations associated with [specify] role○ Very little satisfaction with level of participation in enjoyable aspects of [specify] role |
| | R | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ [Specify] role does not at all contributes to sense of enjoyment in life○ No interest in primary occupations associated with [specify] role○ Dissatisfaction with level of participation in enjoyable aspects of [specify] role |
-

Perceived competence	F	<input type="radio"/> Strong confidence in abilities within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Anticipates success in next six month within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Identifies a number of things (3 or more) done well / proud of within [specify] role
	A	<input type="radio"/> Some confidence in abilities within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Anticipates somewhat successful outcomes within next six month within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Some difficulties identifying something done well / proud of within [specify] role
	I	<input type="radio"/> Very little confidence in abilities within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Significant concerns about failures within next six month within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Major difficulties identifying something done well / proud of within [specify] role
	R	<input type="radio"/> No confidence in abilities within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Anticipates failure in next six month within [specify] role
		<input type="radio"/> Does not identifies anything done well / proud of within [specify] role

-
- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| Habits | F | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Highly organised daily schedule within [specify] role○ Habits within [specify] role contribute towards good level of role balance○ Satisfied with daily routine within [specify] role |
| | A | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Some organisation of daily schedule within [specify] role○ Habits within [specify] role contribute towards some level of role balance○ Somewhat satisfied with daily routine within [specify] role |
| | I | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Very little organisation of daily schedule within [specify] role○ Habits within [specify] role contribute towards very limited level of role balance○ Very little satisfaction with daily routine within [specify] role |
| | R | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No organised daily schedule within [specify] role○ Habits within [specify] role contribute towards lack of role balance○ Dissatisfied with daily routine within [specify] role |
-

Between- role enrichment	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High level of knowledge / skill / attitude sharing between the participant's roles and/or to other people through role modelling ○ Participation in certain roles contributes strongly to participant's energy and capacity with other roles through the experience of respite or renewal ○ Role occupancy in specific roles provides good opportunities for interdependence and shared resources amongst the participant's social network
	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some level of knowledge / skill / attitude sharing between the participant's roles and/or to other people through role modelling ○ Participation in certain roles contributes somewhat to participant's energy and capacity with other roles through the experience of respite or renewal ○ Role occupancy in specific roles provides some opportunities for interdependence and shared resources amongst the participant's social network
	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Very limited level of knowledge / skill / attitude sharing between the participant's roles and/or to other people through role modelling ○ Participation in certain roles contributes very little to participant's energy and capacity with other roles through the experience of respite or renewal ○ Role occupancy in specific roles provides very little opportunities for interdependence and shared resources amongst the participant's social network
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No level of knowledge / skill / attitude sharing between the participant's roles and/or to other people through role modelling ○ Participation in certain roles does not at all contribute to participant's energy and capacity with other roles through the experience of respite or renewal ○ Role occupancy in specific roles provides no opportunities for interdependence and shared resources amongst the participant's social network

Between-role conflict	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participant never experienced incompatible schedules, unexpected events, perceived time scarcity and/or fast pace of life○ Participant never experienced transfer of negative emotions between the participant and members of her social network○ Participant never experienced unrealistic expectations from self and/or others
	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participant rarely experienced incompatible schedules, unexpected events, perceived time scarcity and/or fast pace of life○ Participant rarely experienced transfer of negative emotions between the participant and members of her social network○ Participant rarely experienced unrealistic expectations from self and/or others
	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participant sometimes experienced incompatible schedules, unexpected events, perceived time scarcity and/or fast pace of life○ Participant sometimes experienced transfer of negative emotions between the participant and members of her social network○ Participant sometimes experienced unrealistic expectations from self and/or others
	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participant frequently experienced incompatible schedules, unexpected events, perceived time scarcity and/or fast pace of life○ Participant frequently experienced transfer of negative emotions between the participant and members of her social network○ Participant frequently experienced unrealistic expectations from self and/or others

APPENDIX G

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

(PAPERS I - VI)

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

For all queries, please contact:
Research Ethics Office
 Edith Cowan University
 270 Joondalup Drive
 JOONDALUP WA 6027
 Phone: 8304 2170
 Fax: 8304 5044
 E-mail: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au



OFFICE OF RESEARCH
 AND INNOVATION

270 Joondalup Drive,
 Joondalup
 Western Australia 6027
 Telephone: (08) 9350 1257
 Facsimile: (08) 9350 1257
 CRICOS 002798
 ABN 54 381 485 381

23 June 2016

Ms Kiah Evans
 School of Medical and Health Sciences
 JOONDALUP CAMPUS

Dear Kiah

ETHICS APPROVAL

PhD Project - Student No - 10063653

Project Code:	2776 EVANS	
Project Title:	ROLE BALANCE AND WORKING WOMEN WITH MULTIGENERATIONAL CARING RESPONSIBILITIES	
Chief Investigator:	Ms Kiah Evans	
Approval Dates:	From: 19 August 2008	To: 31 July 2016

Thank you for your recent application for ethics approval. This application has been reviewed by members of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

I am pleased to advise that the proposal complies with the provisions contained in the University's policy for the conduct of ethical human research and ethics approval has been granted. In granting approval, the HREC has determined that the research project meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

All research projects are approved subject to general conditions of approval. Please see the attached document for details of these conditions, which include monitoring requirements, changes to the project and extension of ethics approval.

We wish you success with your research project.

Yours sincerely

Kim Giffkins
 SENIOR RESEARCH ETHICS ADVISOR

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APPENDIX I

INFORMATION LETTERS

WORKING SANDWICH GENERATION

WOMEN

AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

(PAPER VI)

INFORMATION ABOUT Q SORT RESEARCH STUDY

Role Balance Strategies for Working Sandwich Generation Women

My name is Kiah Evans and I am a doctoral student at Edith Cowan University (ECU). My doctoral research is titled “Role balance for working sandwich generation women”.

“Role balance” is defined as the individually perceived state where life is arranged in such a way that adequate balance between important activities and roles is achieved.

“Working sandwich generation women” are defined as women who are combining paid employment with motherhood and providing some form of care or assistance to a parent or parent-in-law.

The primary aim of this project is to explore role balance for working women with both parental and child care responsibilities, and the resulting impacts on health and wellbeing.

This project is important because it will help to identify issues that help and hinder women maintaining role balance when they are combining work and with multigenerational caring responsibilities. This will help to develop strategies to assist women combining these multiple roles.

Respondents are required to have held the following three roles at the same time either in the past or currently:

- Worker in paid employment greater than an average of 12 hours per week (including self-employment)
- Mother to at least one child under the age of 18 years, who lives in the same home as the participant at least half of the time
- Unpaid parental carer to at least one parent or parent-in-law for an average of at least one hour per week for the past six months (this includes any type of care or assistance)

In addition, respondents are required to meet the following criteria:

- Female
- Can speak and write English
- At least 18 years of age
- Residing in Australia

Participating in this study will involve completion of an online Q Sort study to sort a range of role balance strategies from "less helpful" to "most helpful", in response to the prompt: "Based on my personal experiences, my advice to other working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ...".

You will also be asked to answer several survey questions about your roles and role balance.

It should take approximately 25 minutes to complete the research project and there are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this project. One of the first 50 women to complete the study will win a \$100 gift voucher.

A Microsoft Word version is available for participants who are unable to complete the online Q Sort on a Windows computer.

No identifying information is collected and your results will be analysed with the results from other respondents. You will not be identified in any publications or presentations reporting on the research findings. Information gained from respondents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and password secured electronic folders and will be kept for 5 years according to regulations. Following this, all information will be destroyed in a secure manner.

The study will be carried out in a manner conforming to the principles set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact the investigator (kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au), or her supervisor, Dr Sonya Girdler (sonya.girdler@curtin.edu.au) at any time. If you have concerns or complaints regarding the study, you can contact the Research Ethics Officer (6304 2170).

By proceeding with this research project, you acknowledge that you have reviewed and understood the above Information Statement, any questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you consent to participating in this project.

By proceeding with this research project, you acknowledge that:

- You understand that this study requires you to sort a range of role balance strategies from "less helpful" to "most helpful", in response to the prompt: "My personal advice to working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ..."
- You agree to participate in the study outlined above
- You have been informed of and understand the purpose of the study
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been answered and/or you are aware that you have the opportunity to ask questions
- You understand that there are no known risks involved in the study
- You understand that participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw at any time without reason or consequence
- You confirm that you currently meet, or have in the past met, the following criteria at the same time: (1) A mother with at least one child under 18 years of age living with you at least half of the time; (2) Providing at least one hour per week of care or assistance to at least one parent or parent-in-law for at least six months; (3) Spend on average at least 12 hours per week in paid employment; and in addition to these three roles (4) You live in Australia
- You have been informed that all personal information will be kept confidential and any identifiable information will not be used in published material
- You agree that the information you provide can be used in other studies and/or publications
- You have read and understand the above consent information. By proceeding with this study you indicate your willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

INFORMATION ABOUT Q SORT RESEARCH STUDY

An Occupational Therapist Perspective on Role Balance Strategies for Working Sandwich Generation Women

My name is Kiah Evans and I am a doctoral student at Edith Cowan University (ECU). My doctoral research is titled "Role balance for working sandwich generation women".

"Role balance" is defined as the individually perceived state where life is arranged in such a way that adequate balance between important activities and roles is achieved.

"Working sandwich generation women" are defined as women who are combining paid employment with motherhood and providing some form of care or assistance to a parent or parent-in-law.

The primary aim of this project is to explore role balance for working women with both parental and child care responsibilities, and the resulting impacts on health and wellbeing.

This project is important because it will help to identify issues that help and hinder women maintaining role balance when they are combining work and with multigenerational caring responsibilities. This will help to develop strategies to assist women combining these multiple roles. The part of the study that you have expressed interest in completing will involve comparing the advice provided by occupational therapists and sandwich generation women in terms of strategies to assist this group to achieve role balance.

Respondents are required to meet the following criteria:

- Registered with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
- Can speak and write English
- At least 18 years of age
- Residing in Australia

Participating in this study will involve completion of an online Q Sort study to sort a range of role balance strategies from "less helpful" to "most helpful", in response to the prompt: "My professional advice to working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ...".

You will also be asked to answer several survey questions to provide details on the nature of your work as an occupational therapist.

It should take approximately 25 minutes to complete the research project and there are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this project. One of the first 50 women to complete the study will win a \$100 gift voucher.

A Microsoft Word version is available for participants who are unable to complete the online Q Sort on a Windows computer.

No identifying information is collected and your results will be analysed with the results from other respondents. You will not be identified in any publications or presentations reporting on the research findings. Information gained from respondents will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and password secured electronic folders and will be kept for 5 years according to regulations. Following this, all information will be destroyed in a secure manner. The study will be carried out in a manner conforming to the principles set out by the National Health and Medical Research Council and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact the investigator (kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au), or her supervisor, Dr Sonya Girdler (sonya.girdler@curtin.edu.au) at any time. If you have concerns or complaints regarding the study, you can contact the Research Ethics Officer (6304 2170).

By proceeding with this research project, you acknowledge that:

- You understand that this study requires you to sort a range of role balance strategies from "less helpful" to "most helpful", in response to the prompt: "My professional advice to working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ..."
- You agree to participate in the study outlined above
- You have been informed of and understand the purpose of the study
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been answered and/or you are aware that you have the opportunity to ask questions
- You understand that there are no known risks involved in the study
- You understand that participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw at any time without reason or consequence
- You confirm that: (1) You are registered with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia; and (2) You live in Australia

- You have been informed that all personal information will be kept confidential and any identifiable information will not be used in published material
- You agree that the information you provide can be used in other studies and/or publications
- You have read and understand the above consent information. By proceeding with this study you indicate your willingness to voluntarily take part in the study.

APPENDIX J

Q SORT INSTRUCTIONS WRITTEN FORMAT

(PAPER VI)

Q SORT RESEARCH COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

Role Balance Strategies for Working Sandwich Generation Women

Please read the “Information about Q Sort Research Study” and only commence if you have reviewed and understood this information, any questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you consent to participating in this project.

The overall aim of this Q Sort Study is to move all role balance strategies from the list of statements to a unique position on the “Q Sort Grid”, according to if you feel the role balance strategies are **"less helpful" (red)** or **"most helpful" (green)**, in response to the prompt: **"Based on my personal experiences, my advice to other working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ...".***

There are 54 statements. It is possible that you will think that most, or all, of the strategies are helpful – your goal is to sort the cards in terms of how helpful you think they are for achieving role balance.

The first stage is to complete a Rough Sort by reading through each statement and highlighting the **"less helpful" role balance strategies in red** and the **"most helpful" role balance strategies in green**. Leave the remaining strategies as black text with a white background. You should aim to have statements colour coded into three groups with approximately the same number of role balance strategies in each colour.

The second stage is to complete the Q Sort Grid by placing the corresponding number (*see statement list below*) onto the grid according to your perception of how helpful the role balance strategy is for working sandwich generation women. You may also cut and paste the whole statement into the square if this is easier. Begin sorting the statements one by one onto the Q Sort Grid. There is one square on the grid for every corresponding number. Place each corresponding statement number in the column that you think it should be in. You might find that there is **not an exact fit** for all the corresponding statement numbers. If you can't find a 'perfect fit' place the corresponding statement number in the column that you think is the closest to where it should be.

The third stage is to review the Q Sort Grid to check that you are satisfied with the way the cards are organised. At this stage it is possible to re-arrange the corresponding statement numbers on the grid, until you are

happy with their final placement on the grid. There is no right or wrong answer; this is based on your viewpoints.

The final stage is to complete a brief survey about your roles and role balance. You will be asked to enter a name under the “Your identifier” question – please write the code number provided to you by the researcher. If you have not received a code number, please enter a fake name. Please email kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au advising of your fake name to enter the draw for a \$100 voucher. Please respond to each of the questions, and please only select one option for multiple-choice questions. If there is more than one suitable answer, you should select the most applicable response and type a message to the researcher with your other options at the end of the survey under the question “Do you have any other comments?” You can also use the comments section to write notes on your reasons for placing a particular strategy in a specific position on the Q Sort Grid, or any other factors that influenced your decision-making.

Once every square on the Q Sort Grid has a corresponding number in it and you are happy with your answers to both sections, please “save” and email the completed Q Sort Grid and Survey to kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au.

Thank you so much for your participation in this research!

Please do not hesitate to contact Kiah Evans (Researcher) on kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au if you have any questions about the Role Balance Q Sort Study.

STATEMENTS: ROLE BALANCE STRATEGIES

"Based on my personal experiences, my advice to other working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles ..." *

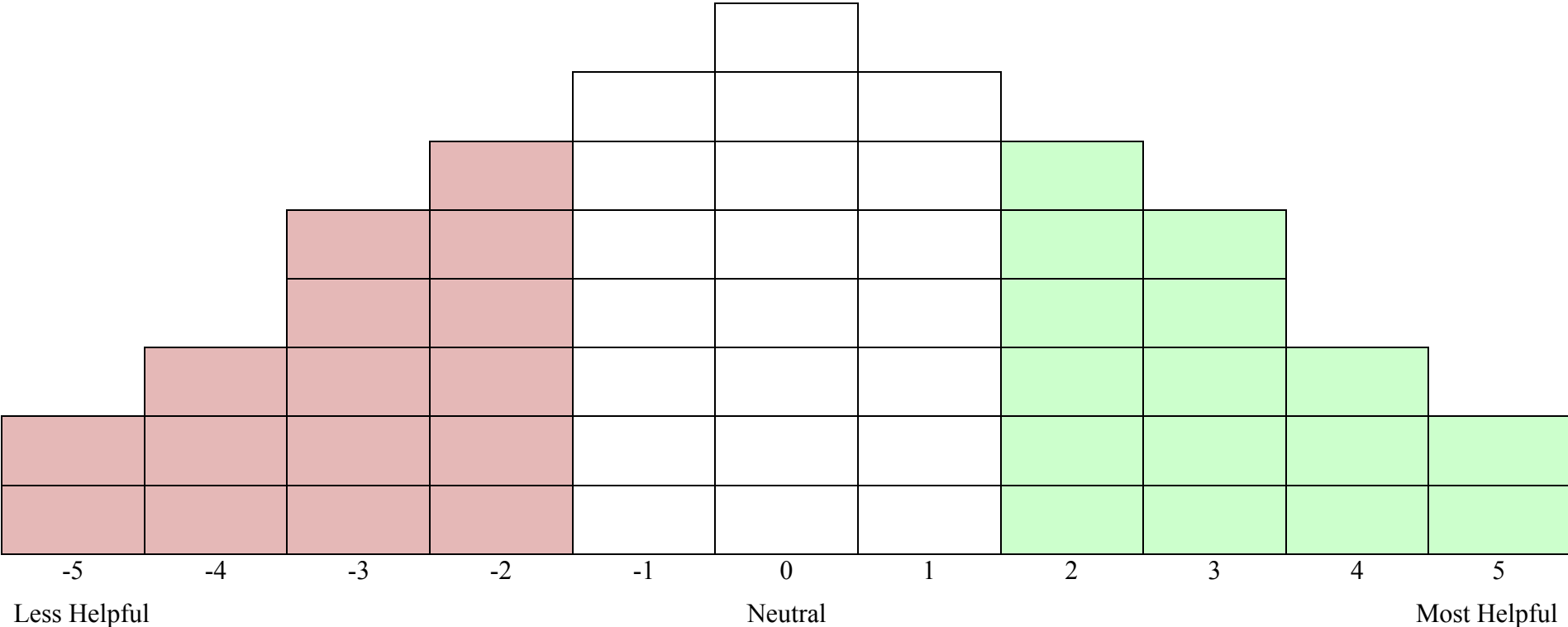
1. by accepting when control is not possible
2. by allowing enough time to relax and recover
3. by allowing for some flexibility and spontaneity
4. by attending to general health needs
5. by balancing activity levels so life feels like it is happening at a comfortable pace
6. by balancing giving and receiving in relationships
7. by being proactive through being prepared and doing tasks in advance
8. by communicating thoughts and feelings with others
9. by creating boundaries so that negative emotional experiences in one role do not impact on other roles
10. by creating opportunities for "me time"
11. by delegating tasks to family or friends
12. by doing more than one activity at once if compatible
13. by doing one activity at a time if focus is needed
14. by eating and drinking in a fairly healthy way
15. by encouraging children and other care recipients to be more independent
16. by engaging in activities that are fun or stimulating
17. by ensuring sufficient variation in everyday activities
18. by exercising fairly regularly
19. by getting enough sleep
20. by having back-up systems in place in case things don't happen as expected
21. by having plans in place regarding how to use time and energy
22. by having systems in place to cope with busy periods
23. by juggling roles through quickly shifting focus back and forth between tasks
24. by maintaining realistic expectations through accepting it is not possible to "do it all"
25. by making every day activities more enjoyable by introducing fun or stimulating elements
26. by making priority choices based on the relative importance of roles and demands
27. by making progress towards aspirations, goals and dreams
28. by meeting responsibilities, obligations and duties
29. by negotiating with others regarding how to share responsibilities

30. by nurturing relationships with surrounding people
31. by outsourcing tasks to paid or government funded service providers, such as childcare, "meals on wheels" or cleaners
32. by paying attention to activities and being mindful in the present moment
33. by practicing gratitude for the good things in life
34. by protecting and setting aside time for important priorities and activities in everyday life
35. by putting in 100% effort during activities considered to be important
36. by realizing others are experiencing similar challenges in life
37. by realizing personal needs are equally as important as other people's needs
38. by recognizing the value of current roles in teaching skills or values to others through role modelling
39. by remembering why an activity or role is important
40. by re-prioritizing when necessary to adapt to available time
41. by satisfying spiritual needs
42. by saying no to requests without feeling guilt
43. by searching for signs of success within a role, such as recognizing both small and large achievements
44. by seeing the benefits or opportunities in a challenging situation
45. by seeking emotional support from family, friends or health professionals
46. by striving to reduce perfectionism
47. by supporting and helping others
48. by taking advantage of opportunities for personal growth, such as learning from mistakes
49. by taking advantage of small pockets of available time
50. by thinking positively
51. by transferring skills or strengths developed in one role into other roles
52. by trying to find humour in challenging situations
53. by using meditation techniques on a regular basis
54. by using time efficiently and effectively

* Occupational therapist version states "My professional advice to working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by ..."

Q-Sort Grid: Role Balance Strategies

"Based on my personal experiences, my advice to other working sandwich generation women would be that they could better balance their roles by"



Survey Questions - Working Sandwich Generation Women

How long did it take you to complete?

- *Free text*

Your identifier (code provided by researcher or a fake name – please email fake name to kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au to enter prize draw):

- *Free text*

Would you recommend any other role balance strategies that you would consider to be "most helpful"? If yes, please describe.

- *Free text*

Please briefly describe your perspective on what it would mean to achieve 'role balance'.

- *Free text*

Postcode:

- *Free text*

Current Age (Years):

- *Free text*

Highest qualification obtained:

- *Did not complete secondary school*
- *Secondary school completion*
- *Certificate 1 - Certificate 4*
- *Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree*
- *Bachelor Degree*
- *Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma*
- *Master's Degree*
- *Doctoral Degree*

Current marital status:

- *Married*
- *De facto or living together*
- *Separated or divorced*
- *Widowed*
- *Single*
- *Other (Free text)*

Current place of residence is:

- *Owned outright*
- *Owned with a mortgage*
- *Being rented*
- *Being occupied rent free*
- *Other (Free text)*

Current individual income (per year before tax):

- *Free text*

Current family income (per year before tax):

- *Free text*

Working sandwich generation status:

- *I am currently combining the roles of mother (child under 18), parental carer (1 hour / week for 6 months) and worker (12 hours / week)*
- *I have previously combined the roles of mother (child under 18), parental carer (1 hour / week for 6 months) and worker (12 hours / week) at the same time. If yes, please specify how long ago and the reason you are no longer part of the “working sandwich generation”. (Free text)*
- *I have never combined the roles of mother (child under 18), parental carer (1 hour / week for 6 months) and worker (12 hours / week) at the same time*

Current job title (include all if you have more than one job):

- *Free text*

Weekly employment hours - paid (average):

- *Free text*

Weekly employment hours - unpaid overtime (average):

- *Free text*

Age of your child(ren) who live with you at least half of the time:

- *Free text*

Age of your other child(ren) not included above:

- *Free text*

Have you provided unpaid assistance of any kind to your mother for at least the past 6 months?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Have you provided unpaid assistance of any kind to your father for at least the past 6 months?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Have you provided unpaid assistance of any kind to your mother-in-law for at least the past 6 months?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Have you provided unpaid assistance of any kind to your father-in-law for at least the past 6 months?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Do you live in a multigenerational household with your child(ren) and at least one parent(-in-law)?

- *Yes*
- *No*

I am satisfied with my overall role balance:

- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly Agree*

Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well:

- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Neither Agree Nor Disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly Agree*

I am pretty good at keeping the different parts of my life in balance; I generally don't let things "slide":

- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Neither Agree Nor Disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly Agree*

Work time, classes and study time, partner time, friend time, family time, leisure time - I find satisfaction in everything I do:

- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Neither Agree Nor Disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly Agree*

I try to put a lot of myself into everything I do:

- *Strongly Disagree*
- *Disagree*
- *Neither Agree Nor Disagree*
- *Agree*
- *Strongly Agree*

Do you have any other comments? This is where you may include notes on your reasons for placing a particular strategy in a specific position on the Q Sort Grid, or any other factors that influenced your decision-making.

- *Free text*

Thank you so much for your participation in this research!

Please do not hesitate to contact Kiah Evans (Researcher) on kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au if you have any questions about the Role Balance Q Sort Study.

Please “save” and email the completed Q Sort Grid and Survey to kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au

Survey Questions - Occupational Therapists

How long did it take you to complete?

- *Free text*

Your identifier (code provided by researcher or a fake name – please email fake name to kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au to enter prize draw):

- *Free text*

Would you recommend any other role balance strategies that you would consider to be "most helpful"? If yes, please describe.

- *Free text*

Please briefly describe your perspective on what it would mean to achieve 'role balance'.

- *Free text*

Postcode:

- *Free text*

Current Age (Years):

- *Free text*

Gender:

- *Female*
- *Male*

Are you currently registered with the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia?

- *Yes*
- *No*

Highest qualification obtained:

- *Bachelor Degree*
- *Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma*
- *Master's Degree*
- *Doctoral Degree*

Years since obtaining qualification as an occupational therapist:

- *Less than 1 year*
- *Between 1 and 5 years*
- *Between 6 and 10 years*
- *Between 11 and 20 years*
- *More than 20 years*

Current job title(s) (e.g. Senior Occupational Therapist, Case Manager, Lecturer etc.):

- *Free text*

Current Area of Practice (e.g. Research, Inpatient Orthopaedics, Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Mental Health etc.):

- *Free text*

Employment Sector (e.g. Government - Community Based, Private Practice, Education - Tertiary etc.):

- *Free text*

Weekly work hours (average):

- *Free text*

Please indicate the most likely relationship to working sandwich generation women that you may encounter in a professional capacity as an occupational therapist:

- *Clients*
- *Mothers of clients*
- *Daughters(-in-laws) of clients*
- *Other family member / friends of clients*
- *Clients (current or future) of staff or students that I am involved in training or supervising*
- *Staff or students under my supervision*
- *Other (Free text)*
- *I would never encounter working sandwich generation women in my work*

Please indicate the frequency that you provide role balance advice to clients in general:

- *Daily*
- *Weekly*
- *Monthly*
- *Quarterly*
- *Annually*
- *Not yet, but it is a potential duty*
- *Other (Free text)*

Do you have any other comments? This is where you may include notes on your reasons for placing a particular strategy in a specific position on the Q Sort Grid, or any other factors that influenced your decision-making.

- *Free text*

Thank you so much for your participation in this research!

Please do not hesitate to contact Kiah Evans (Researcher) on kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au if you have any questions about the Role Balance Q Sort Study.

Please “save” and email the completed Q Sort Grid and Survey to kevans5@our.ecu.edu.au.

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