

Administrative requirements and job satisfaction in early childhood education and care.

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Certification by the Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Administrative requirements and job satisfaction in early childhood education and care” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Committee (Human Research), reference number: 5201400632 on 24 July, 2014.



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List of Abbreviations

ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSMAC	Community Services Ministers’ Advisory Council
Cth.	Commonwealth
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DSS	Department of Social Services
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
ECJSS	Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey
EVLN	Exit Voice Loyalty Neglect
JCM	Job Characteristics Model
JDI	Job Descriptive Index
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
NCSWS	National Children’s Services Workforce Study
NPA	National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care
NQA	National Quality Agenda
NQF	National Quality Framework
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SCSEEC	Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood
SRC	Social Research Centre
Vic.	Victoria

Glossary of Terms

Approved Provider

An individual or organisation that has been granted approval to operate a children's service pursuant to the *National Law and Regulations*.

Approved qualification

Early childhood education and care qualifications that are recognised in Australia under the *National Quality Framework*.

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

An independent national body established to guide the nationally consistent implementation of the *National Quality Framework* for early childhood education and care settings.

Authorised officer

A person with authority under the *National Law* to act on behalf of a regulatory authority.

Certificate III level qualification

Defined by the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. It is a qualification approved as a Certificate III level qualification by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. It is important to note that this *level* of qualification can include a variety of qualifications including qualifications awarded as a Certificate IV.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

The organisation which represents the Commonwealth state and territory governments as well as local governments (through the Australian Local Government Association) to discuss and debate matters that are of intergovernmental significance.

Diploma level qualification

A professional award defined by the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and approved as Diploma level qualification by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. It is important to note that this *level* of qualification can include a variety of awards including qualifications awarded as certificate or degree qualifications.

Early Childhood Development Strategy (ECDS)

A strategy agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments in 2009 in which a national vision for improving the future for children in Australia was expressed.

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

A term used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2006) to refer to children's services provision comprising both care and education components.

Early Childhood Teacher (ECT)

A person who holds a professional award that is approved as an early childhood teaching qualification by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. It is important to note that this *level* of qualification can include a variety of awards including qualifications awarded as a diploma or degree (both bachelor and masters level).

Educative care

Describes work which involves both education and care components.

Educator (Early childhood)

In Australia, a person working in an early childhood education and care service who has some responsibility for both the care and education of children. Educators may be trained and hold relevant certificate, diploma or degree based qualifications, or they may be working towards an approved qualification.

For-profit organisation

An organisation in which any profits are for the gain or benefit of private parties. For-profit early childhood education and care services may include privately owned and corporate centres.

National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care (NPA)

An agreement by the Commonwealth and states and territory governments focusing on improving the quality of services through the implementation and maintenance the *National Quality Agenda*.

National Quality Agenda (NQA)

Embraces all of the reforms agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments aimed at improving the quality of and creating a unified system of early childhood education and care and out of school hours care.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

An instrument established in 2012 to achieve Australia’s strategic vision for improving early childhood education and care incorporating the *National Law*, *National Regulations*, *National Quality Standard* and an Assessment and Rating system.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Criteria for assessing the quality of children’s services across seven critical areas.

Non-teacher

In this study, a “non-teacher” refers to any educator who does not hold an early childhood teaching qualification approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.

Nominated Supervisor

The certified supervisor nominated by an approved provider to be responsible for the day to day management of an early childhood education and care service. This person has particular responsibilities relating to the provision of the service under the *National Law*.

Not-for-profit organisation

An organisation in which any profits are reinvested or held for the benefit of the organisation. This may include early childhood education and care services operated by councils, faith-based organisations and community-based incorporated associations.

NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate (NSW ECECD)

The regulatory authority in NSW and part of the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

NSW ECECD

See NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate.

Registered carer

An individual either within a centre or who independently provides child care who has met the requirements to enable eligible families to claim certain government subsidies.

Regulatory Authority

A state or territory based government body that is responsible for the management, implementation and administration of the *National Quality Framework* and its role includes the assessment and rating of early childhood education and care services.

Service Supervisor

Any person, who is appointed by a nominated supervisor or approved provider, and who gives their consent to be placed in charge of the day to day management of a children's service in the absence of the approved provider or nominated supervisor.

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Abstract

Early childhood educators in Australia navigate a complex set of legal requirements in their daily practice. In addition to industry specific regulations there are many other laws which create administrative obligations for staff including workplace safety, taxation, food safety, immunisation and industrial relations laws. Reflecting on the ubiquity of these laws in prescribing specific practices for all staff in early childhood settings, there is a conspicuous lack of current research relating to the relationship between administrative requirements and their implications for educators. Informed by industrial-organisational psychology, this study explored the way in which administrative requirements influenced the job satisfaction of educators. Data was collected through a survey of 126 educators working in long day care centres in the state of New South Wales (NSW) who assumed both teaching and administrative responsibilities. Ten of these participants self-nominated for a follow up interview to explore relevant issues in more depth. Findings from the survey and interviews suggest that administrative responsibilities can be both a source of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction for early childhood educators, with different aspects contributing to educators' positive and negative attitudes towards their work. Complicating these results were issues relating to the way in which educators managed the paid time allocated to them to perform administrative work. Findings from this study have implications for ECEC policy and practice in terms of how administrative work is performed in centres.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Organisation of the Chapter

The role of educators in early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in Australia involves more than the direct care and education of children. An essential component of an educator's work involves compliance with government regulations and numerous administrative requirements. Despite the pervasiveness of these administrative requirements, it is an area which has received minimal attention in research. The central issue explored in this thesis is the influence of administrative requirements on the job satisfaction of educators employed in ECEC centres.

This chapter introduces and contextualises the study presented in this thesis. The first section provides an overview of ECEC in Australia and the fundamental policy and legislative changes which have transformed the sector in recent years. The roles and responsibilities of ECEC educators are discussed in relation to two major issues within the sector: relatively low rates of pay and high staff turnover. The second section defines the scope of the study and articulates the overarching aims of the thesis and the research questions being investigated in this study. The third section asserts the significance of the study with reference to the need for research in this area and the potential to gain important insights about the practices of educators that may influence future practices and policy. The final section provides an outline of the remaining chapters contained in this thesis.

1.2. ECEC in Australia

In recent years there have been many fundamental changes which have impacted upon ECEC services in Australia. The sector has become increasingly professionalised (Bretherton, 2010; Lyons, 2012) and has fought to challenge public perceptions of centre-based services as being simply about the care of children (Fenech, Sumsion, & Shepherd, 2010) by highlighting that education is also an integral component of ECEC service delivery (Fenech, Waniganayake, & Fleet, 2009).

Across Australia there are a variety of informal arrangements and formal services that provide ECEC (Productivity Commission, 2014). Informal ECEC includes care of children by relatives, friends, babysitters and au pairs and nannies. Formal ECEC comprises children's programs provided within licenced centres or community venues (such as long day care, preschool, occasional care, budget based services and mobile services) as well as programs provided within the homes of the educators (family day care and home based ECEC), and services provided within the child's home by registered carers and through in-home care (for more information, see the Productivity Commission, 2014, pp. 76-88).

Quality ECEC programs enhance children's wellbeing, learning and development, offer essential support to families, facilitate parents' participation in the paid workforce and provide long term social benefits for society in the form of citizens who have higher levels of social engagement (Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2009a; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2006). ECEC is a matter of national importance (Irvine & Farrell, 2013a); an investment in a child's development as well as the nation's future (Brennan & Adamson, 2014). In Australia, intervention by governments in ECEC is seen as necessary to ensure quality, accessible and affordable services (Productivity

Commission, 2014). One mechanism which governments use to give effect to these public policy objectives is regulation (Kamerman, 2000).

1.3. Regulation of ECEC in Australia

Prior to 2010, the regulation of ECEC in Australia was characterised by complexity and fragmentation (COAG, 2009a) due to the absence of a nationally coordinated system. Each state and territory government had responsibility for regulating services within their own jurisdiction; and a shared responsibility for funding ECEC and developing and implementing public policy with the Australian Government. This resulted in a “patchwork” (Rush, 2006, p. 9) of legislation across Australia within each jurisdiction that has persisted despite attempts to introduce national standards for long day care centres in 1993 (Irvine & Farrell, 2013b).

The influential OECD report *Starting Strong II* (2006) provided a much needed stimulus to review the necessity for significant reforms in ECEC in Australia. Governments recognised the important role that ECEC has beyond its utility in assisting parents to return to the paid workforce (COAG, 2009a). In 2007, responsibility for child care was transferred from the Department of Families, Communities and Indigenous Affairs to the Department of Education (McMeniman, 2008). This represented a national acknowledgement of the dual roles of ECEC services to provide both care and education and recognition that education begins in early childhood (McMeniman, 2008). Changes to terminology in the sector have mirrored a paradigm shift in understanding the important work being conducted in ECEC settings. Terms such as “children’s services” and “early childhood education and care” are increasingly being adopted in preference to “child care” because of the ability of these

terms to emphasise the educational aspects of the work being conducted and promote esteem within the sector (Lyons, 2012).

Constitutionally, ECEC is a state and territory responsibility (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2014) therefore agreement between the Australian Government and the eight states and territories was essential to establish a unified system of national regulation. In 2009, the crucial role that ECEC has in supporting children's development and learning was expressly acknowledged and a vision was established for the future of ECEC in which "all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves, and for the nation" (COAG, 2009a, p. 13). To achieve this united vision for a single national system of ECEC in Australia, the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments signed the *National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care* (NPA) (COAG, 2009b). This agreement brought into force a range of reforms to most of the sector under the *National Quality Agenda* (NQA) and the introduction of the *National Quality Framework* (NQF) aimed at establishing a national system of quality provision of ECEC services.

National consistency and quality provision was to be accomplished through the enactment of legislation and the establishment of a jointly governed body, Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), to oversee it. A system of applied law was used to achieve uniformity across the eight jurisdictions. Victoria, as the host jurisdiction, passed the *Education and Care Service National Law Act, 2010* (Victoria) and subsequently, each of the other state and territory governments passed their own adopting and/or corresponding laws using the Victorian law as a template. In NSW the law was adopted as a law of NSW through the *Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application), Act 2010* (NSW). Collectively, these laws are known as the *Education and*

Care Services National Law (the *National Law*) (see Appendix 1 for a list of these laws). These laws apply to the majority of ECEC services in Australia including most long day care, family day care, out of school hours care services and preschools. There are still some services, not within the scope of the NQA to which these laws do not apply, including occasional care services and mobile preschools (for a comprehensive list of in scope and out of scope services, see ACECQA, 2014). Some out of scope ECEC services may be regulated by state or territory laws; while others are not subject to any regulation (Education Council, 2014).

The *National Law* gave the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) (now replaced by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC)) the power to make regulations (sections 301 and 324) governing various aspects of ECEC service provision including health standards for children; safety requirements for the physical site where the service is provided; fitness and propriety of staff; and the records and policies which services must have (*National Law*, section 301(3)). These regulations are known as *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (the *National Regulations*).

1.3.1. Governance and administrative responsibilities.

Some administrative responsibilities of both employees and those who own ECEC centres are defined in relevant legislation. Direct responsibility for ensuring compliance with the *National Regulations* for instance, falls to the approved provider (a person or entity who has been approved to apply to operate an ECEC service) and/or nominated supervisor (a person

who is responsible for the daily management of the service). Failure to comply with some regulations may result in infringement notices with financial penalties or compliance directions being imposed. For example, an approved provider may receive a maximum penalty of \$2000 for failing to document the rehearsal of emergency and evacuation procedures; failing to keep certain records for students and volunteers; or failing to document assessments of children's learning that are readily understood by families.

While legal responsibility may fall upon approved providers and nominated supervisors, many administrative duties may be delegated to other staff within ECEC services in practice. Teachers, diploma and certificate trained educators may all have administrative duties that they are required to complete. These may include completing incident, illness or medication records, documenting and assessing children's learning and development, and contributing to the development of policies or the *Quality Improvement Plan* (for further information see http://www.acecqa.gov.au/quality-improvement-plan_1).

The administrative responsibilities of ECEC staff coexist amongst many other legal requirements that also entail paperwork. These may be derived from local, state or Commonwealth laws. For example, long day care services in NSW are required to maintain an immunisation register for children (*Public Health Act, 2010 (NSW)*); to develop a detailed privacy policy (*Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act, 2012 (Cth)*); and have policies related to supporting injured employees return to work (*Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act, 1998 (NSW)*). There are many other sources of administrative requirements including taxation, business/trading, child protection, fundraising and employment laws that ECEC services need to comply with.

Two related objectives of the NQA were to reduce the regulatory and administrative burden for ECEC services (COAG, 2009b) by avoiding unnecessary duplication and creating

consistency between jurisdictions. The first *Report on the National Quality Framework & Regulatory Burden* (ACECQA, 2013) found that only 2% of service providers did not find the ongoing administrative requirements of the NQF as burdensome. In the second report (ACECQA, 2014) this figure grew marginally to 3%. Recalling COAG's (2009a) vision that "[b]y 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation" (p. 13) it is important to note that COAG recognised that the greatest barrier to achieving this vision were issues related to the ECEC workforce.

1.4. ECEC Educators¹ in Australia

Despite COAG's vision for a stable ECEC workforce underpinned by good working conditions and "incentives" to continue working in the sector (COAG, 2009a, p. 20), the current reality for those employed as ECEC educators differs markedly. Turnover within the sector continues to be problem (Cumming, Sumsion, & Wong, 2015; Productivity Commission, 2014) despite obfuscating distinctions being made between ECEC staff leaving the sector or leaving their current service (Productivity Commission, 2011). In terms of service provision, either kind of turnover presents instability within services and has the potential to diminish quality provision including having an adverse impact on children's learning (Huntsman, 2008; Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol, 2004; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990). The most recent statistics available based on the Workforce Census of 2006, suggests conservatively, that 15.7% of staff left the sector each year (Productivity Commission, 2011). This data also

¹ A person working in ECEC setting who has some responsibility for both the care and education of children. Educators may hold relevant certificate diploma or degree based qualifications or they may be working towards an approved qualification.

indicates that the job turnover rate in the sector is 32% (Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC), 2006). Research from the United States indicates that the most important factor contributing to ECEC staff turnover appears to be low wages (Smith, 2004; Warner et al., 2004; Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 2014; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003), a view echoed by the Productivity Commission (2014) in its assessment of the ECEC workforce in Australia.

The majority of long day care staff in Australia are dissatisfied with their pay and conditions (The Social Research Centre (SRC), 2014). Low rates of pay within the sector are a chronic problem (Productivity Commission, 2011, 2014) with weekly earnings being lower than the average of all other occupations (Productivity Commission, 2014). Accompanying the introduction of the *National Law* and *National Regulations* was another fundamental change for the sector – the introduction of *Modern Awards* in 2010 (Bryant & Gibbs, 2013). A comparison of wage rates for long day care staff in not-for-profit centres was made using archived and current pay rates from Community Connections Solutions Australia (<http://www.ccsa.org.au>) of Certificate III, Diploma and Early Childhood Teachers on commencement. Adjusting for inflation using the Reserve Bank of Australia Inflation Calculator (<http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/quarterDecimal.html>), it can be shown that wage rates for these classifications have *decreased* between September 2009 and September 2014. Compounding this problem of low rates of pay, there is also evidence to suggest that many educators are completing work without pay (Jovanovic, 2013; Lyons, 2003).

1.5. Scope and Aims of the Study

This exploratory study focuses on educators working in long day care centres in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Of the various formal ECEC services available, long day care centres are the most utilised (Department of Social Services (DSS), 2014; Productivity Commission, 2014). These centres in NSW account for around one third of all children attending long day care in Australia (DSS, 2014).

In its report, the Productivity Commission (2014) noted the concerns of ECEC stakeholders regarding the increased regulatory burden since the introduction of the NQF and its potentially deleterious effect on the job satisfaction of ECEC staff who were completing work in their own time to ensure compliance. Within the context of a highly regulated and poorly remunerated sector, the aims of this study are:

- To investigate the impact of administrative requirements on the job satisfaction of ECEC educators;
- To explore various aspects of administrative requirements as potential sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; and
- To determine whether there were significant differences in the attitudes of educators towards their work based on their qualifications and specific characteristics of their workplace; namely management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location.

By undertaking this study it was anticipated that the findings may be used as a catalyst for reflecting on educator experiences of administrative requirements and how these impacted on the provision of quality ECEC services. Based on these aims, the main research question (RQ) considered was:

RQ1: How do administrative requirements influence the job satisfaction of educators working in in long day centres in NSW?

Two key sub-questions which extended issues raised within the main research question were also investigated:

RQ2: What attitudes do educators have about their work in general, and about their administrative responsibilities in particular?

RQ3: How do service characteristics (management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location) and qualification levels, influence the job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction of educators?

1.6. Significance of the Study

Although job satisfaction in ECEC has been previously explored in Australia and internationally (Bloom 1988; Miller & Bogatova, 2009; Daly Wagner & French, 2010), there has been minimal attention given to the impact of regulations on job satisfaction (see for example, Fenech, 2006; Fenech, Sumsion, & Goodfellow, 2006; Fenech, Sumsion, Robertson, & Goodfellow, 2007) despite the burden of regulation on educators being well documented (ACECQA, 2013, 2014; Blau, 2007; Duncan, 2004; Greishaber, 2002). Further, there has been no research on the potential impact of administrative requirements on the job satisfaction of ECEC staff within the contemporary Australian regulatory context despite the issue being identified as a concern (Productivity Commission, 2014). This study is therefore significant in its uniqueness and timeliness in exploring matters which have been receiving national attention in recent years.

While there have been many studies both in Australia and internationally focussing on the job satisfaction of ECEC teachers (especially those in management or leadership positions) as will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, there has been a marked lack of research investigating the job satisfaction of non-teacher educators. In Australia, recent changes to legislation² have made it much simpler for non-teachers to be given legitimate leadership roles through appointment as a 'certified supervisor'. This study is significant in that through their inclusion, the important role that non-teachers have in the provision of ECEC services is acknowledged.

The delivery of quality ECEC services is dependent upon staff (Lyons, 1997). In Australia, there is a regulatory demarcation of work that is conducted "directly with children" (*National Regulations*, regulation 13) and that which is not. The work of ECEC educators involves performing multiple roles which require them to prioritise aspects of their work (Waniganayake, 1998). For many educators this work includes both administration and direct education and care responsibilities and it is the tension between these two roles which was of interest in this study. Two potential and equally unpalatable consequences may result from a situation in which staff do not have enough paid time to complete their work. First, there was research to suggest that many staff completed work outside of hours (Aubrey, 2011; Lyons, 2003), sacrificing their own needs in order to preserve a paramount focus on children's interests (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Jovanovic, 2013; Murray, 2000). Alternatively, there was evidence to suggest that for many educators, administrative work diverted them from other activities (ACECQA, 2013). Whether or not this included educative care work was unclear. Accordingly, this study makes an important

² Changes were made in the *Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations, 2014* which came in force from 1 June 2014. For more information see the ACECQA website at <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/amendments-to-the-education-and-care-services-national-regulations>.

contribution to understanding the ways in which administrative requirements affect the job satisfaction of educators and how administrative requirements impact on the essential work carried out by educators responsible for both educative care and administrative responsibilities.

This study is also significant because it explores educators' perceptions of their relationships with children and families within the context of their job satisfaction. This key aspect of an educator's work is positioned alongside established facets of job satisfaction in ECEC (Bloom, 1988; 2010). This study highlights that relationships with children and families were not merely ancillary issues, but for most staff, were more important than any other aspects of their work including pay, working conditions and relationships with co-workers.

1.7. Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the study, situating the topic within the ECEC landscape in Australia. It has highlighted fundamental changes within the sector that have consolidated the importance of this research.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature, focusing on the past three decades that are relevant to understanding job satisfaction and administrative requirements in ECEC. It explains how the theoretical foundations for this study were established and includes a synthesis and analysis of Australian and international research. This chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the literature to be addressed through this study. Chapter 3 describes the methods used in this study to investigate the three research questions driving the study. The key results of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Following the presentation of

demographic statistics, an analysis of participants' attitudes towards their jobs, administrative requirements and particular aspects of their administrative duties are provided. Significant differences based on selected characteristics of those participating in the study are also presented. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study within the context of relevant literature highlighting the complexity in understanding educators' experiences with and perceptions of administrative requirements. The final chapter reflects on the findings of this study in relation to the aims and research questions that this study set out to explore. The limitations of the study are also presented in terms of its generalisability and validity. The thesis concludes with a discussion of how this study can contribute to the sector in terms of its implications for educators, families, employers and policy makers, including suggestions for future research.

1.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the contextual backdrop for this study through an introduction to ECEC regulations and quality service provision in contemporary Australia. Key aspects of the ECEC workforce were also discussed with reference to the administrative responsibilities of educators; in particular, the problems of low wages and high turnover. This discussion highlighted the need for research investigating the influence of administrative requirements on the job satisfaction of educators. In the following chapter, a thematic review of literature is presented to position this study within the context of previous research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Literature for this review was sourced through library database searches conducted through A+ Education, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Education Research Complete, PsycINFO and Macquarie University Multisearch databases and Google Scholar. Each search was limited to literature published in English between 1984 to 2014. This represents a 30 year period commencing just before Bloom's (1988) ground-breaking work on job satisfaction in ECEC. A combination of the following key words were used during the searches: centre, service, child care, childcare, day care, early years, early childhood, education and care, regulation, administration, accountability, legislation, job satisfaction, work attitude, educator, early childhood teacher, child care worker and caregiver. These words reflect relevant topic areas and terminology for describing ECEC services and personnel. As a follow-up, other relevant literature published before 1984 and in early 2015 was also included in the final analysis as presented in this chapter.

This review is structured so that it provides a synthesis and analysis of relevant research to advance an understanding of the influence of administrative requirements on the job satisfaction of educators employed in ECEC settings. Drawing on formative and current research from Australia and overseas, this review provides an evidence based foundation to contextualise the research questions being pursued in this study. The overall analysis clearly indicates the paucity of scholarly research relating to job satisfaction and administrative requirements which are an important part of an ECEC educator's work.

2.1. Job Satisfaction – Theories

This study began with a focus on theories from industrial-organisational psychology, a field of study which has traditionally focused on understanding workplace behaviours (Katzell & Austin, 1992). Industrial-organisational psychology provides fundamental definitions and explanations of job satisfaction built upon decades of research. Although much of this research focuses on business or industrial sectors, it is relevant to and has been referenced in studies in ECEC contexts (see for example, Hayden, 1996 and Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2004). How these theories have been used in research within the ECEC sector is discussed next.

2.1.1. A definition of job satisfaction.

In his seminal definition, Locke (1976) states that job satisfaction is a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or experiences” (p. 1300, original emphasis omitted). Similarly, Bloom (2010) who wrote extensively on job satisfaction within child care centres in the United States, defines job satisfaction as being an “evaluative reaction to the organization” (p.13). Judge, Parker, Colbert, Heller, and Ilies (2001) observed that in Locke’s definition of job satisfaction, there were two interrelated elements: cognition and affect. The same can be said in relation to Bloom’s definition.

‘Cognition’ refers to the way a person thinks and this may reflect their beliefs about their job; and ‘affect’ refers to the way a person feels about their job (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Judge et al., 2001). The terms ‘appraisal’ and ‘evaluation’ in the definition of

job satisfaction may be considered cognitive in nature; while references to 'emotional state' and 'reaction' comprise the affective components. Therefore job satisfaction, in simple terms, may be understood as the way in which one thinks and feels about their job.

A person's thoughts or feelings about their job may be positive or negative. The term 'job satisfaction' may be used as a reference to the concept itself, embracing both positive and negative appraisals; or limited to the positive evaluations of a person's job (Bloom, 2010). 'Job dissatisfaction' however, refers exclusively to negative evaluations (see for example, Farrell, 1983). The question as to whether or not job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction should be considered as independent concepts (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959/1993) or direct opposites has long been the subject of debate (Locke, 1976). However, prevailing theories suggest that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction should be understood as opposites along a single continuum (Judge et al., 2001).

2.1.2. Global satisfaction and facet satisfaction.

An appraisal of a person's job may be conducted on two levels: globally, where a person evaluates their job as a whole, or through particular facets where individuals assess their attitudes towards specific aspects of their job (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989). Global and facet measures of satisfaction each have their own utility. Global satisfaction measures contribute to an understanding of how an employee feels about their job overall (Ironson et al., 1989) and measures of facet satisfaction may highlight aspects within a job that an employee feels strongly about (Bloom, 2010).

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) originally developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) identified five specific facets of job satisfaction relating to the work itself, pay, opportunities for promotion, supervision and relationships with co-workers. The JDI was developed after a series of studies in the United States which included surveys of staff and students at Cornell University, members of a farmers' cooperative, employees at electronics companies and a bank. The JDI has been updated three times and because of these frequent updates it remains a popular, reliable, contemporary tool for organisations across various sectors (Brodke et al., 2009). The *Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey* (ECJSS) (Bloom, 1988, 2010), discussed in more detail in Section 3, also measures job satisfaction across five facets and was somewhat similar to the JDI. There were however, two notable differences.

First, pay and promotion opportunities were combined in the ECJSS but were separated in the JDI. Smith et al. (1969) defended their decision to separate pay and promotions in the JDI arguing that for the groups of workers that were the subject of their study, these facets had discernible differences. In the ECJSS however, pay and promotion opportunities were grouped together on the basis that both facets have important symbolic significance for employees connected with job security and status (Bloom, 2010). Further, the relatively flat organisational structures found in Australian child care centres (Bretherton, 2010) may account for the low importance accorded to opportunities for promotion within the sector. The second difference is that the ECJSS included 'working conditions' as a separate facet. This inclusion was based on evidence of the significant impact that the working environment and the way in which work was structured can influence an individual's attitudes to their job (Bloom, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

The nature of the work itself is considered perhaps the most fundamental element in understanding an individual's overall satisfaction with their job (Judge et al., 2001). The Job

Characteristics Model (JCM) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) reflects situational theories of job satisfaction which explain how someone feels about their work. Situational theories were defined by Judge et al. (2001) as suggesting that “job satisfaction results from the nature of one’s job or other aspects of the environment” (p. 28). As this study was concerned with examining the impact of administrative requirements on job satisfaction, situational theories provided an appropriate foundation for data analysis.

The JCM was concerned with the relationship between particular job characteristics and a person’s attitudes towards them. Hackman and Oldham (1976) nominated five job characteristics which can influence job satisfaction – namely skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. When these factors were present, they can create states of positive affect for the employee including job satisfaction. Even though their study comprised of 658 people who were all employed within the business sector, as is expanded in Section 3, the same characteristics of a job were considered as important determinants of the attitudes of educators working in ECEC settings (Bloom, 2010; Daly Wagner & French, 2010; Kontos & Stremmel, 1988). In their synthesis of the literature on job satisfaction in schools, Thompson, McNamara, and Hoyle (1997) also suggested that task characteristics as opposed to characteristics of an individual or an organisation was the most significant determinant of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction of school teachers and administrators. While their literature review did not include ECEC settings, it is important in that educators in both ECEC and school settings share the dual responsibilities of teaching and completing administrative work.

2.2. A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Consequences of Job Dissatisfaction

Understanding a person's attitude towards their job is an important predictor of workplace behaviour (Ironson et al., 1989). The kinds of behaviours that might result from low levels of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction were described in the Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Neglect (EVLN) model developed by Farrell (1983) who based his work on Hirschman's (1970) identification of three dimensions, exit, voice and loyalty, as possible consequences of job dissatisfaction.

According to Hirschman (1970) "exit" refers to situations in which an employee chooses to leave an organisation or part of it. For example, in an ECEC service this might mean moving between centres owned by the same organisation or leaving the sector altogether. "Voice" relates to any attempts by an individual to change aspects of their job that they perceive as disagreeable. "Loyalty" refers to situations in which an employee chooses not to act with the hope that the situation can improve. The term loyalty belies the negativity associated with the situation in which an employee can "suffer in silence" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 38). For educators, such a situation may reflect what is described as "burnout", a condition which may manifest in fatigue, depression, negativity and detachment (Boyd & Schneider, 1997). This is a particularly concerning issue within a profession that requires constant "emotional availability" involving both young children and adults (Tsigilis, Zachopoulou & Grammatikopoulos, 2006), and which refers to the ability to develop and sustain sensitive and positive emotional relationships (Biringen & Easterbrooks,

2012). One potential implication is that when educators are feeling stressed it may impact negatively on children's educational and learning outcomes (Kontos & Stremmel, 1988).

"Neglect", the final category articulated by Farrell (1983), includes situations where dissatisfaction was expressed through negligent behaviours. For example, this may include staff absenteeism, tardiness and inattention. Research has shown that children who have attentive and responsive caregivers achieve better developmental outcomes than those who do not (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In addition, absenteeism may diminish opportunities for staff to develop secure and trusting relationships with children (Goelman & Guo, 1988) and create instability within the service (Jackson & Forbes, 2015).

2.2.1. Expressions of job dissatisfaction in Australia.

The impetus for exploring job satisfaction within the Australian ECEC contexts becomes apparent when reviewing literature on issues associated with expressions of job dissatisfaction. In particular, high turnover rates are repeatedly cited as a significant and long-standing problem (for example Bretherton, 2010; Fenech & Sumsion, 2007; Jovanovic, 2013; Lyons, 1996). The analysis of the *2013 National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* (the *Census*) (SRC, 2014) offers an indirect perspective on job turnover in the ECEC sector. Although there were no specific references to turnover, 19.6% of respondents to the *Census* survey reported that they did not expect to have the same employer one year later.

Statistical data relating directly to turnover rates appears to be both limited and dated. The *National Children's Services Workforce Study* (NCSWS) (Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council, 2006) reported national turnover rates of 32% within the

sector; 26% in NSW and alarmingly 60% in South Australia. An interesting perspective on these statistics can be found in the Productivity Commission's (2011) *Early Childhood Development Workforce Research Report*. The report suggests that turnover rates within the ECEC sector in Australia are comparable to rates in other industries. The Productivity Commission qualifies this by pointing out that there were higher turnover rates in rural and remote areas and note also that ECEC teachers leave the sector to seek employment in primary schools. This report emphasised that this was not a *sectoral* problem where high numbers of people left the ECEC workforce, but rather that the statistics presented in the NCSWS were inflated by the inclusion of people simply changing their employer. What the report fails to take into account was the consequences of having nearly one third of ECEC staff leave their jobs as noted in the NCSWS (p. 4) in terms of the negative impact of turnover on the quality of care provided by ECEC services (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

It has been well established that there is a link between staff turnover and the quality of programs provided by ECEC services (Cassidy, Lower, Kintner-Duffy, Hegde, & Jonghee, 2011; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Whitebook, Sakai, & Howes, 1997). This is because a fundamental element of quality is the relationship between educators and children (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). To ensure quality care, therefore, it is essential to provide a stable workforce who can establish secure attachments and provide continuity of care (Bretherton, 2010; Harrison, 2008; Huntsman, 2008).

In addition, staff turnover can also have negative outcomes for employers who must bear the costs associated with recruiting, selecting and training new staff (Jovanovich, 2013). Given that job dissatisfaction can have negative consequences for all involved in ECEC settings – the staff, children and families and service providers, it is imperative to learn

more about aspects of an educator's job that may have a cumulative effect on their job satisfaction (Bloom, 1988).

One of the objectives of the major reforms undertaken through the introduction of the NQA, was to reduce the administrative burden for ECEC services (COAG, 2009a). The intended outcome is revealing in that it demonstrates an acknowledgement by Australian governments that the legal obligations expected of ECEC educators presented an administrative burden; moreover, that it was an issue that demanded both attention in terms of signifying it as a concern, and investment by directing resources to address and monitor the problem (COAG, 2009a). As part of the process of addressing the issue of the regulatory burden, ACECQA was given the task of measuring the burden from its inception until 2016 (ACECQA, 2013). In the first report investigating the administrative burden of the NQF on ECEC services, the majority of approved providers surveyed did not perceive a reduction in the regulatory burden following the introduction of the NQF (ACECQA, 2013). Therefore, the learnings derived from the exploration of limited research on job satisfaction and administrative obligations published prior to the introduction of the *National Quality Agenda* (COAG, 2009b) and reviewed in this chapter, continue to be relevant to the current investigation.

2.3. Research on Job Satisfaction in Early Childhood

One of the greatest contributions to the study of job satisfaction in ECEC settings is the development of the *Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey* (ECJSS) by the American researcher, Paula Jorde Bloom (2010, 1988). She developed the ECJSS through research with

early childhood staff based on the idea that it is important to examine particular dimensions of a person's job rather than their work as a whole because an individual's attitude to work can vary in response to different aspects of their job. The facets included in the ECJSS, which share similarities to those identified in the JCM, were co-worker relations, supervisor relations, the nature of the work, pay and opportunities for promotion and general working conditions. While Bloom's research provides a valuable resource for measuring an individual's evaluation of their job and for demonstrating the way in which various facets may be both sources of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, it was necessary to look further to understand how and why different facets may influence job satisfaction in relation to legislative requirements.

2.3.1. The potential of different aspects of ECEC work to influence job satisfaction.

When considering overall satisfaction and facet satisfaction, it is important to recall both the potential for measures of overall satisfaction to conceal evaluations about particular aspects of a person's job, as well as the potential impact of a person's attitude to one or more facets of their job (Smith et al., 1969). Therefore, while global measures offered a valuable insight into how an employee felt about their job overall, there may be issues within the job that have the potential to affect the employee's general satisfaction. It was essential therefore to ensure that the distinctly different aspects of a person's job were identified and evaluated (Smith et al., 1969) so that their potential impact may be better understood. In this section, research on job satisfaction and specific aspects of ECEC educators' jobs that may relate to administrative duties were reviewed. This review provides the evidential basis

for the selection of specific facets of administrative satisfaction that informed the construction of the survey used in this study.

There was a great deal of research on different aspects of ECEC work that may contribute to job satisfaction. Having the autonomy to make decisions was a factor associated with job satisfaction (Bloom, 1988; Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Boyd & Schneider, 1997; Fenech, 2006; Whitebook et al., 1990). Mandated regulations were viewed as constraining autonomy when they required rigid obedience, specific standardised practices (Fenech, 2006; Novinger & O'Brien, 2003) and left no margin for the educator to exercise professional judgement (see Shepherd, 2004). Consequently, if administrative requirements were perceived as constraining autonomy they may also impact negatively on the way educators think and feel about their job.

Research has also shown that job satisfaction was influenced by the clarity and consistency of how job roles and expectations were defined (Goelman & Guo, 1998; Manlove, 1993). In the study conducted by Manlove (1994) involving 188 child care workers in Pennsylvania, the aim was to explore the relationship between burnout and conflict and ambiguity in work roles. Conflict and ambiguity in work roles reflected situations where expectations were not clearly defined or understood or when expectations were contradictory. Manlove found that the child care workers who perceived or experienced conflict or ambiguity in their work roles had higher levels of burnout.

Based on research conducted in Australia, in terms of legislative requirements, ambiguity or conflict in work roles may result from difficulties in interpreting and understanding regulations (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Fenech et al., 2007). Therefore, if administrative requirements are unclear and subject to multiple interpretations, this could impact negatively on job satisfaction. Fenech and colleagues (2007) undertook a unique

empirical study which explored job satisfaction in relation to regulatory obligations. Involving 212 long day care centre teachers with management responsibilities, this study attempted to determine whether the regulations in NSW could be considered a source of job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. The authors speculated that satisfaction with the regulations could predict job satisfaction; however this was not the case. In explaining this finding, Fenech et al. suggested that teachers may view regulations as impacting both positively and negatively on their practice with an overall neutral outcome. An alternative explanation may have been possible by considering the results from the perspective of assessing role conflict and ambiguity in employment contexts (Manlove, 1994). This may manifest as a perception that duties (for example, ensuring regulatory compliance and caring for children) can be in conflict with each other; or that regulatory requirements expected of staff were unclear. Teachers may agree with the legitimacy and intentions of the legislation (Fenech, 2006; Fenech et al., 2006). However, if they perceived regulatory responsibilities as diverting them from other necessary activities or that they were subjected to multiple and inconsistent interpretations of their responsibilities as ECEC staff (ACECQA, 2013; Productivity Commission, 2014), these factors may contribute to their dissatisfaction with their jobs. It was also important to note that inconsistency and ambiguity in understanding and implementing regulation have been identified as problematic features of the NQF (Education Council, 2014). These inconsistencies therefore, may be potential sources of job dissatisfaction for educators.

There was also empirical evidence to support the fact that educators derive job satisfaction from variety and challenge in their work (Bloom, 1988; Kontos & Stremmel, 1988). However, there were no studies to confirm the currency or applicability of this pattern in contemporary Australian ECEC settings. Administrative requirements also have

the potential to erode job satisfaction because many administrative tasks were prescribed and repetitive (Fenech, Sumsion, & Goodfellow, 2008). In addition, concerns were raised that tasks requiring external accountability also had the potential to reduce an educator's professional esteem (Fenech, 2006). These Australian studies suggested that educators may experience job dissatisfaction when administrative tasks were perceived as dull or boring.

Goal consensus was also identified as contributing to job satisfaction (Fenech et al., 2007). In a study that considered various dimensions of the working environment as predictors of burnout, Boyd and Schneider (1997) defined goal consensus as "the notion that all employees of a center operate with the same set of goals in mind and share a clear understanding of the philosophy of the program" (p. 178). With reference to legislative obligations, goal consensus may occur when educators believed in the legitimacy of the rules and what was being asked of them (Fenech, 2006). This may also be the case with administrative requirements. Depending on whether educators perceive paperwork as legitimate or not, this may impact significantly on their attitude towards their job.

Research also indicates that wages or rates of pay were an important component of job satisfaction. Low wages have long been an issue of concern in attracting and retaining ECEC educators (Lyons, 2003). As noted by Jovanovic (2013) and Bretherton (2010), poor pay continues to be the primary reason why educators working in long day care centres leave their jobs. Research based in the United States also suggests that when wages were increased, turnover declines (Whitebook, et al., 1997). This finding, though based on a study conducted almost 20 years ago, is echoed in the conclusion of the Productivity Commission's Report (2014, p. 309) which stated "[t]here are no significant regulatory or other impediments preventing the ECEC sector from addressing any recruitment, retention and workforce shortage issues through higher wages, better conditions and improved

career opportunities.” It must be cautioned that this finding was not based on empirical research.

The negative impact of low rates of pay is compounded by the fact that ECEC staff appear to be consistently performing work in an unpaid capacity. While research demonstrates a link between job satisfaction and paid preparation time (Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1991) it appears that in many centres in Australia, child free program preparation time was either insufficient or non-existent for many educators. For example, in his study of staff in long day care centres, Lyons (2003) found that 60% of staff routinely engaged in unpaid overtime. Educators consistently reported that they did not have enough time to fulfil administrative requirements and instead, performed these tasks in their own time during meal breaks, at home and at work (out of hours) and without pay (Fenech, 2006; Jovanovic, 2013; Lyons, 2003). Therefore, to gain a comprehensive understanding of how administrative work influences job satisfaction, it will also be necessary to collect data about the number of unpaid hours educators may be working.

The high incidence of work being completed without pay may be attributed to educators subjugating their own needs and prioritising the interests of others including children and families (Bown & Sumsion 2007; Jovanovic 2013; Lyons, 2003). The role of an ECEC employee has been described as multifaceted and involves the balancing and prioritising of responsibilities (Hayden, 1996; Waniganayake, 1998). For many ECEC educators this involves undertaking direct work with children as well as administrative responsibilities. In circumstances where educators perceive that aspects of their job conflict with educative care responsibilities, there is ample evidence that educators will place the needs of the children above all else (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Bretherton, 2010; Jovanovic, 2013; Lyons, 2003; Simms, 2006; Waniganayake, Nienhuys, Kapsalakis, & Morda, 1998). The

willingness to prioritise the interests of others may be a reflection of the importance which many educators attribute to their work (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Hall-Kenyon, Bullough, MacKay, & Marshall, 2014).

When people experience work as something that is worthwhile and valuable, work becomes meaningful and meaningfulness is positively associated with job satisfaction (Bloom, 1988, 2010; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Siegle, McCoach, & Shea, 2014). In terms of administrative requirements in ECEC contexts, meaningfulness may relate to the way in which paperwork was able to support professional practice and relationships, enhance quality and professional esteem and promote workplace safety (Fenech, 2006; Fenech et al., 2007).

Relationships with others can be a source of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Positive relationships with co-workers have been found to be another important source of job satisfaction (Kontos & Stremmel, 1988, Whitebook et al., 1990) while relationships with supervisors were more likely to be cited as a source of job dissatisfaction (Bloom, 1988). However, in a more recent study, Daly Wagner and French (2010) researched ECEC teachers' motivations for professional growth and found that employees who experienced supervisor support in terms of quality, quantity and competence were more motivated than those who did not. However, Daly Wagner and French's research focused on a specific professional development program in the United States. Whether or not supportive relationships with co-workers and supervisors contribute to administrative satisfaction in the context of everyday practice is also explored in this study.

An important but neglected aspect in ECEC research is the relationship and tensions between staff in ECEC settings and authorised officers who administer government regulations, previously known as "Children's Services Advisors" (Fenech et al., 2006; Fenech

& Sumsion, 2007). In light of the fact that ECEC service providers have reported that face to face guidance and training would be desirable in facilitating a reduction of the administrative burden on services (ACECQA, 2013), it appears likely that perceived support from regulatory authorities has the potential to enhance administrative satisfaction.

Each of the aspects of ECEC educators' work discussed in this chapter relate to administrative requirements. The exploration of these facets has the potential to provide a deeper level of understanding of how administrative requirements can influence an educator's perceptions of their job. This is especially important in light of the Australian governments' acknowledgement that educators experience an administrative burden (ACECQA, 2013, 2014) which may impact on job satisfaction (Productivity Commission, 2014).

2.4. Research Methods for Measuring Job Satisfaction

Having identified potential factors that may contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it is then necessary to explore how these may be measured. One of the most common methods for collecting data about an employee's job satisfaction was the use of self-completed survey questionnaires (Judge et al., 2001). Surveys typically asked participants to respond to multiple choice questions on job satisfaction issues (see for example, Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2013) and/or rate specific facets of their jobs using Likert-type scales (Bloom, 2010). In addition, participants were afforded the opportunity to nominate additional sources of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction through open-ended questions to permit a combination of free and structured responses (Bloom, 1988, 2010; Herzberg et al., 1959/1993).

Bloom (2010) argues that the tools used for evaluating job satisfaction must be adapted for the ECEC sector because it is dramatically different in terms of its organisational contexts and the demands placed on its employees. Bloom's instrument, the ECJSS, has been tested for both its reliability and validity (Bloom, 1988, 2010) and used extensively either in its entirety or in part by researchers studying job satisfaction and associated issues in early childhood settings (for example, Buell, 1999; Daly Wagner & French, 2010; Gable & Hunting, 2001; Pope & Stremmel, 1992).

The first part of the ECJSS in its current form contains 10 sub-facets which relate to the five facets – co-worker relations, supervisor relations, the nature of the work itself, working conditions and pay and promotion opportunities. Each of the sub-facets is scored using a five point scale. “Strongly disagree” appears at one end and “strongly agree” at the other. The three increments between them are unlabelled. Each increment is given a score from 1 to 5 with a low score reflecting a negative evaluation toward a particular sub-facet. The total score for each facet then ranges from 10 to 50, with higher scores indicating more positive assessments.

The second part of the ECJSS survey asks respondents to consider the extent to which their present job reflects their ideal job. In the third part, respondents are provided with an opportunity to nominate up to two sources of satisfaction or “frustration”. The final section is on commitment to the organisation. Bloom's work provides an important framework for exploring job satisfaction in ECEC settings because it identifies important and distinctly different aspects of the work of ECEC staff as well as methods for measuring job satisfaction.

To explore the specific relationship between regulatory obligations and job satisfaction, Fenech et al. (2007) used a survey which collected data about the attitudes and

beliefs of ECEC teachers toward the regulatory environment as well measuring their satisfaction with the regulations and their job overall. This research highlights the importance of legislative obligations on the everyday practice of educators and enhances understandings of how regulations can be a source of job dissatisfaction.

Relevant data from the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census 2013* (the *Census*) (SRC, 2014) collected from ECEC services across Australia was also examined in this review. The survey obtained demographic and personal information from the respondents including their age and qualifications, the main type of work performed, the hours worked (paid and unpaid) and their intentions to remain in their job. Respondents were also asked to rate their agreement to statements about their satisfaction with their job, pay and conditions, status in the community and management support. Unlike the five point scale in the ECJSS, all of the categories in the *Census* were defined (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree).

2.5. Gaps in the Research

Although there has been significant work done in understanding the nature and sources of job satisfaction in ECEC settings, research about the impact of compliance with legislative requirements on educators remains scarce. This is compounded by several issues which limit the value of the research discussed above.

Many influential studies related to job satisfaction and/or regulations in ECEC contexts have been conducted overseas. For example, consider research from the United States by Blau (2007), Bloom (1988), Daly Wagner and French (2010); from Canada, Boyd

and Schneider (1997); from the United Kingdom, Rodd (1999); and from New Zealand, Duncan (2004). While these studies provide a wealth of information, the application of findings from research conducted overseas must be considered with the particularities of the Australian context in mind. This includes recognition of the impact of a unique set of laws in each country pertaining to the administration and management of ECEC settings, including the employment of staff. The laws can affect for example, the rates of pay and qualification classifications, the roles and expectations of staff, and the tasks and responsibilities expected to be performed.

Australian research on job satisfaction and regulations in ECEC settings is both limited and dated. Since Fenech (2006) and Fenech et al. (2007) conducted their research, a new system of national laws and regulations has been introduced, bringing a raft of policy changes including new ways of defining staff responsibilities and prescribing specific practices. Given the ubiquity of the regulations in defining the work of educators in Australia, it is essential that local research is conducted which explores the way in which these laws may impact on daily practice.

Another pattern emerging from this review of relevant research was the specific focus on ECEC teachers (see for example, Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Fenech & Sumsion, 2007; Kelly & Berthelsen, 1995). While it would be accurate to assume responsibility for meeting regulatory obligations is more likely to fall on staff with higher qualifications (cf Fenech & Sumsion, 2007), having university qualifications is not a requirement of being an “approved provider”, “nominated supervisor”, “certified supervisor” or “responsible person” – positions which all entail responsibility for ensuring the regulations are implemented. Indeed, recent amendments (in June 2014) to the *National Regulations* provide greater flexibility to services when selecting people to be in charge of daily operations. The

amendments allow services to appoint supervisors based on their responsibilities within the organisation. This change accords with the flat organisational structures of many ECEC services in Australia (Bretherton, 2010) where roles and responsibilities are shared. Reflecting on the potential of all educators to assume responsibility for ensuring legislative obligations are observed regardless of their qualifications, it appears prudent to include them in future studies.

Another gap in the research conducted to date relating to ECEC educators' experiences with regulations is the limited scope of studies which focus exclusively on ECEC legislation and regulations (for example, ACECQA, 2013; Fenech et al., 2006; Lyons, 1997). The reality of the work of an educator who takes responsibility for the daily operation of a service is that they must fulfil multiple obligations and complete numerous administrative tasks that are derived from diverse sources. Studies exploring administrative work should take these numerous obligations into account because each contributes to the daily work of staff in ECEC services.

One of the most surprising aspects uncovered in this review of the literature on job satisfaction was the minimal attention given to educator relationships with children and families. For example, Bloom (1988) in referring to a previous decade of research, noted that teacher interactions with children were the most significant source of job satisfaction. However within the ECJSS, references to these relationships were contained within sub-facets of "The Work itself" (see for example, Bloom, 2010, Appendix A). Research by Kontos and Stremmel (1988) also indicated that what the teachers surveyed valued most about their jobs were their interactions with children. Others noted that relationships with families are also regarded as important and desirable aspects of an educator's work (Duncan, 2004; Shepherd, 2004).

It is possible that predefined facets of a job may mask an employee's attitude towards a factor that has not been explicitly identified. For instance, if interactions with children are a source of satisfaction for educators, then it is important to discern if something that they regard as conflicting with this is a source of job dissatisfaction - specifically when performing administrative requirements. Kelly and Berthelsen (1995) suggest that a source of stress for teachers was the necessity to engage in non-teaching tasks including paperwork. Similarly, Boyd and Schneider (1997) found that a source of tension for child care educators was the conflict between attending to children's needs and observing rules that formed part of the management and administration of a centre. These sentiments were echoed by Jovanovic (2013) who argued that the very measures which governments put in place to ensure quality may be undermining quality in a centre with staff feeling stressed and burnt out, trying to juggle routine and administrative tasks with limited time to focus on core care and education responsibilities. Disturbingly, 23 of the 28 staff interviewed by Jovanovic (2013) reported that they did not have enough time to carry out their educative care work when working directly with children. Reflecting on the importance of relationships with children and families and the apparent willingness of many ECEC staff to place others' needs above their own, it seems that an understanding of job satisfaction could be enhanced by the inclusion of measures that expressly recognises these influences.

Educators' attitudes toward administrative requirements warrant examination through systematic research investigation in order to make adjustments in policy and practice to achieve better outcomes for children and families. The balancing of core care and education roles with management and leadership tasks requires attention because of the tension created by responsibilities that can be both conflicting and complimentary. It is

with a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction that it may be possible to improve working conditions for educators and enhance the quality of learning outcomes for children attending ECEC services.

2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an analytical overview of relevant literature from Australia and overseas, situating this study within the existing body of research based knowledge. A theoretical foundation for understanding job satisfaction and dissatisfaction was proposed. This review also discussed approaches for measuring job satisfaction to justify the selection of methods used in exploring the research questions pursued in this study. These methods are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology of this study. The approach to the study and design measures will be presented. Data collection and analysis procedures will also be specified prior to a description of the study sample.

3.1. Approach to the Study

A mixed methods research approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2014) comprising two stages of data collection was designed to address the key research questions being investigated in this study. This work was informed by situational theories of job satisfaction that focus on job satisfaction as being a product of the job or the work environment (Judge et al., 2001) (see Section 2.1). The research methods used in this study focused on collecting data about educators work settings and their attitudes towards specific aspects of their job.

Stage One involved the construction and distribution of an online survey and Stage Two comprised a series of semi-structured interviews. A mixed methods approach was chosen because of the potential of these complimentary methods to maximise the comprehensiveness of the data collected (Torrance, 2012), to illuminate and clarify patterns and enhance the findings (Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

3.2 Design Measures and Stages

3.2.1. Online survey – Stage 1.

Stage One, a survey (Appendix 2) was constructed using the *SurveyMonkey* online survey software and questionnaire tool (available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>) The survey used a combination of single and multiple answer questions with both open and closed responses, fully anchored rating scales (Johnson & Christensen, 2014), a ranking question and a checklist. The survey was divided into seven parts, comprising 33 items or questions:

- Part 1: assessed the eligibility of participants to complete the survey (Questions 1 to 5).
- Part 2: asked participants to provide demographic information about themselves and their place of employment (Questions 6 to 16).
- Part 3: questioned participants about their overall attitudes towards their job beginning with their attitude towards a key variable - job satisfaction (Question 17). The question and measures were replicated from the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census* (SRC, 2014), with the exception of the inclusion of an additional question related to the perceived impact of educators' work on other people. The replication of questions was designed to allow data between this study and the data from the *Census* to be compared, with any similar findings contributing to the confidence of the findings in this research (see Johnson & Christensen, 2014).
- Part 4: requested participants to rank various aspects of their job from least to most important (Question 18). Five of the classifications (relationship with co-workers; relationship with supervisor; the work itself; working conditions and pay and promotion opportunities) were based on the categories identified in the *Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey* (Bloom, 2010). A category relating to the importance of relationships

with children and families was also added to explore educator's perceptions of their relationships with children and families in the context of other aspects of their job.

- Part 5: collected data on the time which participants spent engaged in educative care work and administrative work (Questions 19 to 24).
- Part 6: asked participants to indicate their agreement to statements about various aspects of administrative work (Questions 25 to 29). These statements were constructed with reference to the review of job satisfaction literature which identified specific facets of educators' jobs that could be relevant to administrative tasks (Section 2.5.1). These facets were categorised as relating to professional practice, support, pay and conditions, relationships, and application and interpretation.
- Part 7: requested participants to choose the statement which best described their overall administrative satisfaction (Question 30). Participants were also provided with the opportunity to freely comment on any issues raised in the survey (Question 31).

3.2.2. Individual interviews – Stage 2.

In Stage Two interviews were conducted with participants who completed the online survey. A total of 36 survey participants originally indicated their preparedness to participate in an interview. However, at the time of making arrangements for the interview, only 10 were able to participate. The one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were designed to explore educators' perceptions of the ways in which administrative tasks impacted their daily practice in more detail. Accordingly, nine pre-determined questions (Appendix 3) were devised to obtain in depth explanations of various responses emerging from a preliminary analysis of survey data.

3.3. Ethical Considerations of the Study

The ethical aspects of this study were considered and approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference: 5201400632). A copy of the approval appears in Appendix 4. During this process, procedures for recruiting participants, obtaining their consent and protecting their privacy were defined and approved.

In the email which formed the invitation for eligible educators to participate, details about the study and its voluntary nature were explained (Appendix 5). Further, prior to beginning the survey, participants were again asked to indicate their consent by marking a check-box in Question 1 (Appendix 2). For participants who chose to proceed with phone interviews, written consent was obtained before going ahead with the interviews and preparing transcripts of these interviews (Appendix 6). These documents also reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

3.4.1. Quantitative data.

Data collection

The participants of Stage One, the online survey, were recruited through emails sent to long day care centres located in NSW. A list of long day care centres was compiled by cross referencing centres listed on the Australian Government's *MyChild* website (<http://www.mychild.gov.au>), filtering the list on this website by using the terms "long day

care” and “NSW”, with ACECQA’s online *National Register of Education and Care Services* (<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-registers>) (which was a limited search targeting services in NSW). The information on the *MyChild* website and the register is open for free public access. There were also no restrictions on the use of the information contained in either database. Email addresses of prospective services were then extracted and duplicates deleted. This produced a list of 2112 email addresses. These addresses were then assigned a random number in Microsoft *Excel* and sorted to produce a random list of long day care centres comprising a total of 300 services. This number was initially assessed as sufficient to achieve the target of 100 responses.

Once the survey was sent to the email addresses on the random list of centres, it was at the discretion of the person receiving the survey to choose whether or not to complete it and whether or not to pass it on to other colleagues. Participation in this survey was also based on three eligibility criteria: participants were required to be currently working in a long day care centre in NSW, 18 years of age or over and engaged in both working directly with children and completing administrative work each week. The requirement that participants undertake education and care work in conjunction with assuming administrative responsibilities was essential to answering questions in the survey because it is the tension created by potentially conflicting duties (see Jovanovich, 2013; Waniganayake, 1998) that is of interest in this study. Importantly, the survey was not restricted to university trained educators with teaching qualifications. This is in recognition of the fact that there are diploma and certificate level trained educators as well as educators who are working towards the completion of their qualifications who undertake administrative duties in long day care centres.

Initially 300 surveys were circulated by email but with a response rate of less than 10 per cent (23 were received) it became apparent that it was necessary to target more centres in order to obtain at least 100 completed surveys. In addition, around three per cent of the emails failed to reach their destination due to an assortment of errors on the *MyChild* website including invalid addresses as well as centre mailboxes being full. Accordingly, more surveys were distributed to the remaining email addresses in random batches of around 300 at a time. Consequently, 126 participants completed the online survey and these form the basis of Stage One data analysis.

Quantitative data analysis

All the quantitative data were collected through the survey in Stage 1. The survey was initially open for a period of three weeks, however this was extended by one week to enable educators taking leave during school holidays sufficient time to complete the survey. Survey data (with the exception of Question 31, the open ended comments) were then exported into *SPSS Statistics for Windows*, Version 22 (IBM, 2013) for statistical analysis. In addition to descriptive analysis, three types of relationship analyses were also undertaken: Spearman's rank order correlation analysis, Mann-Whitney U tests and Kruskal-Wallis H tests.

Correlation Analysis

In order to investigate possible associations between administrative satisfaction, job satisfaction, paid and unpaid hours and facets of administrative satisfaction, correlation analyses were undertaken. The data used in this analysis related to the survey questions which asked participants to provide an answer using the rating scales provided. The data from these questions were treated as ordinal (see Field, 2013) as although the statements

could be placed in order (for example, “highly agree” could be given a greater value than “agree”), it was not possible to attribute a value to describe the differences between each point on the scale (for example, it is not possible to say that by selecting “highly agree” participants felt twice as strongly about the response). The treatment of the data had implications on the types of analyses that could be conducted. Spearman's rank order correlations were chosen as an appropriate method for analysing ordinal data (Field, 2013). Through this test, it is possible to explore associations between the different variables. The test measures how strongly an association is between items and provides information about the direction of the association (for example, whether one variable increases when the other increases). To describe the strength of the relationship, qualitative descriptors (weak, moderate, strong) are used based on Evans' (1996) categorisations. Although such descriptors are arbitrary (Muijs, 2004), they are valuable as a way of comparing and understanding the results.

In preparation for the analysis, the categories about attitudes towards paperwork as “both a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction” and “neither a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction” were combined to form a single neutral category as it was not possible to determine the order of these categories within a rank. The order of the categories was then reversed so that a rank of “1” represented “A major source of satisfaction” through to “5” “A major source of dissatisfaction”. This was necessary to ensure that there was uniformity in the treatment of all of the variables so that a higher number represented greater negativity towards the statement.

Statistical tests for comparing differences

To determine whether or not there were differences in the job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction of participants based on centre characteristics (management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location) and participant qualifications, two different statistical tests were conducted through SPSS. The first of these, the Mann-Whitney U test, looks at differences between two groups and can be used for data that is ranked (Field, 2013). Thus, it was appropriate to explore whether there were differences in the responses to each of the job satisfaction attitude statements and the administrative satisfaction of participants from rural and metropolitan based centres.

The second group of tests used the Kruskal-Wallis H test (also known as a one-way ANOVA on ranks). This test also looks at differences between groups but can be used when there are more than two groups (Field, 2013). The test was used to explore whether there were statistically significant differences between each of the job satisfaction attitude statements and the administrative satisfaction of participants according to management type, organisation size, centre size and qualification level. In cases where the outcome of the test was that the null hypothesis (the idea that the populations are identical) (Evans, 2014) was rejected, the means between the groups (pairwise comparisons) were inspected to reveal the extent of the differences between groups.

3.4.2. Qualitative data.

Data collection

Qualitative data analysed in this study were from Question 31 in the survey and one-on-one interviews. Each interview was completed in approximately 20-40 minutes. With permission

from each participant, the interviews were digitally recorded. Interview participants were then provided with an opportunity to review their transcript and no corrections were made. This process of member checking (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Torrance, 2012) afforded each interviewee the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the data to be used.

Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data in this study were analysed through thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This data was then imported into *NVivo qualitative data analysis software*, Version 10 (QSR International, 2012) and coded to identify key themes within the data. The principle themes that emerged are contained in Appendix 7. Once these data were collected they were aligned with quantitative data to enhance the analysis of the survey findings.

3.5. Study Sample

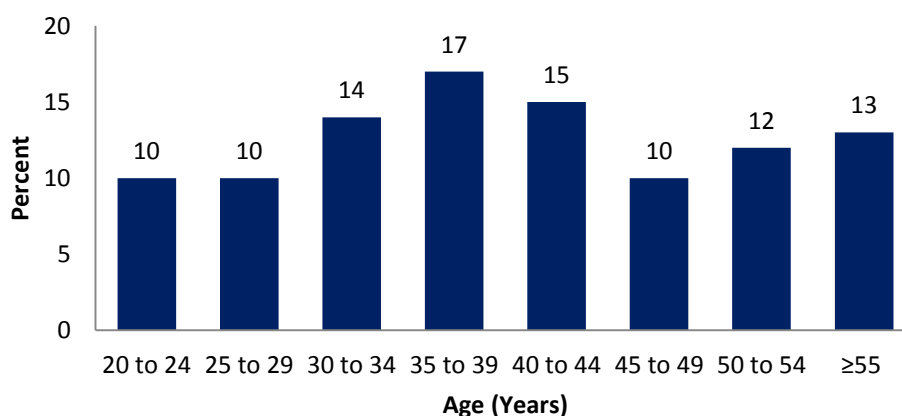
3.5.1. Online survey respondents.

At the time of closing the online survey portal, a total of 189 online surveys were received. Of those surveys received, approximately one third (63) were not fully completed. Accordingly, only 126 completed surveys were included for analysis. In the *Census* (SRC, 2014) 20,588 individuals reported having a direct contact role with children in long day care centres located in NSW. There were no statistics on how many of these were responsible for completing administrative work on a regular basis. However, using the entire *Census* population and given the sample size of 126 in this study, the survey results are presented using a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of $\pm 8.7\%$.

Demographic characteristics of the survey participants

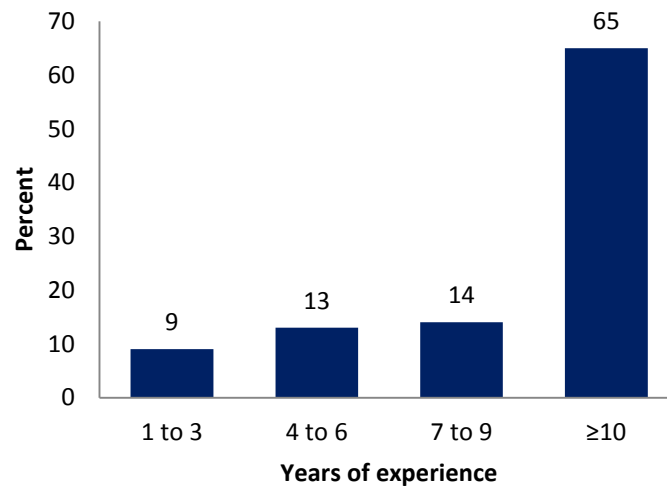
The overwhelming majority of survey participants were female ($n=122$, 97%). With rounding, this result was identical to the percentage of female participants in the *Census*. However, as a group, participants were older and more experienced than long day care centre staff in the *Census*. In this study, half of the participants were aged 39 or under (Figure 3.1) and 65% of participants had 10 years or more experience working in ECEC (Figure 3.2). In contrast, 65% of participants in the *Census* were aged 39 or under and only 28% of all staff had 10 years or more experience. This may be a reflection of the criteria in this study that participants were required to have both administrative responsibilities and educative care responsibilities; whereas the *Census* was open to all staff involved in ECEC and did not have questions relating to their specific job roles and responsibilities. It is also likely that initial recipients of the email invitation to take part in this study would have been in senior positions in their organisation (such as being the approved provider or nominated supervisor) and as the identified contact person for the organisation, simply completed the survey themselves.

Figure 3.1. Participants by age.



Note: Due to rounding, the proportions do not add up to 100 per cent.

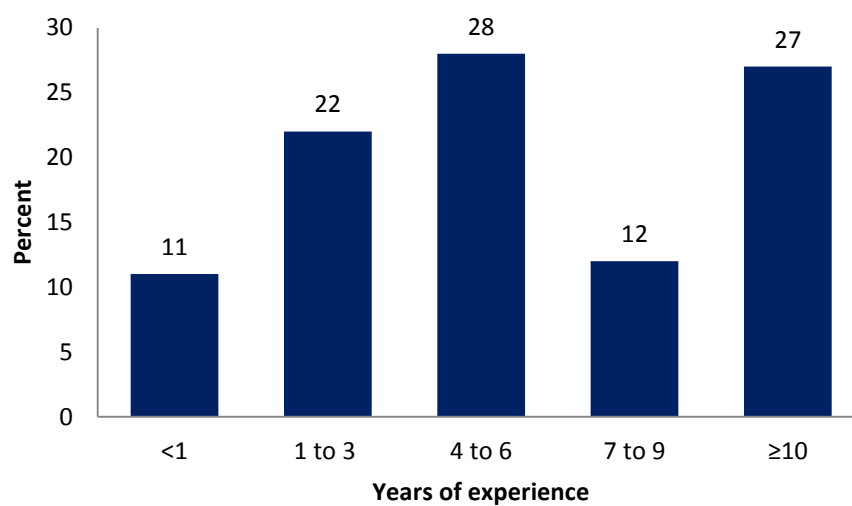
Figure 3.2. Years of experience working in early childhood education and care.



Note: Due to rounding, the proportions do not add up to 100 per cent.

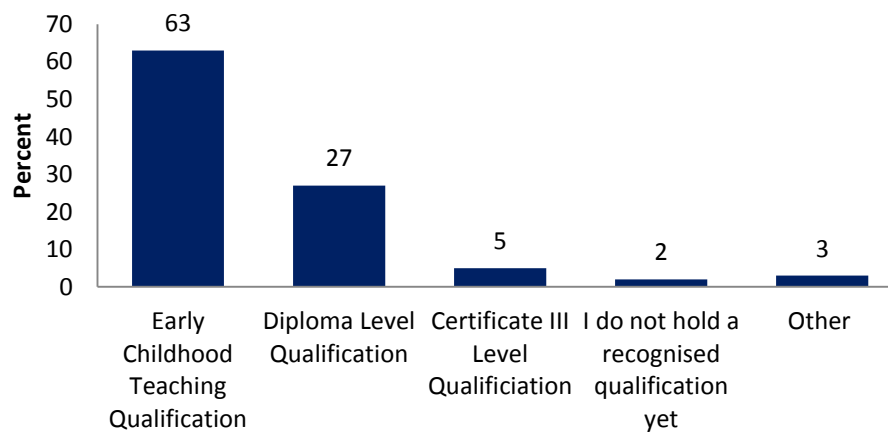
The majority of participants ($n=84$, 67%), reported being in their current position for 4 or more years (Figure 3.3). This figure is only slightly higher than the tenure of contact staff reported in the *Census*, at 63%.

Figure 3.3. Tenure in current position.



In Figure 3.4, it can be seen that the majority of participants in this study ($n=79$, 63%) were qualified as early childhood teachers. More than a quarter of participants ($n=34$) reported having a diploma level qualification and less than 3% ($n=3$) did not hold any recognised early childhood qualification. These statistics are very different to those in the *Census* where four times as many participants reported not having a recognised ECEC qualification.

Figure 3.4. Highest recognised qualification held



The data in this study may be impacted by the fact that those receiving the initial email to participate may have held leadership positions within the organisation and were also therefore typically well qualified as ECEC educators. Moreover, regulatory changes to qualifications requirements enforced from January 2014 (after the *Census* data were collected) required all staff working in long day care centres to hold or be working towards a recognised ECEC qualification. The minimum requirement for this is a Certificate III level education and care qualification; and at least 50% of the staff employed must hold or be working towards a diploma level qualification. In addition all services are also required to have access to early childhood teachers – the specific number being dependent on the size

of the service (see the ACECQA website at <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/Early-childhood-teaching-qualifications>).

Of the three participants who did not hold a formal ECEC qualification, two were actively working towards obtaining either a recognised certificate III level or teaching qualification. In total, 26 participants (21%) reported being in the process of obtaining an ECEC qualification, comprising either a certificate III ($n=1$), a diploma ($n=5$) or a bachelor degree ($n=13$). Another 7 participants reported that they were currently studying towards another type of qualification. These included what they described as “upgrades” to their current qualifications ($n=2$), an education based masters degree ($n=1$) and management or leadership qualifications ($n=4$).

3.5.2. Interview participants

As discussed above, ten survey participants chose to also participate in an interview. Select information about each interview participant is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Selected information about interview participants.

Pseudonym	Rebecca	Leah	Alison	Angela	Jessica
Primary job role	Director	Owner	Director	Nominated supervisor	Director
Centre management type	Community ^a	Private ^b	Campus based ^c	Government ^d	Community
I am satisfied with my job	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
I am satisfied with pay and conditions	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
The job is stressful	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Paperwork is	A source of job dissatisfaction	A major source of job dissatisfaction for me	Both a source of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction	A source of job satisfaction	A source of job satisfaction
Paid hours per week	45	14	40	40	38
Unpaid hours per week	-	25	6	-	7.5

(Table 3.1 is continued on the next page).

Table 3.1. Continued

Pseudonym	Ellen	Kylie	Jackie	Kate	Mary
Primary job role	Owner	ECT ^e	Director	ECT	Director
Centre management type	Private	Private	Community	Private	Private
I am satisfied with my job	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with pay and conditions	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree
The job is stressful	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree
Paperwork is	A major source of job dissatisfaction for me	A source of job satisfaction	Neither a source of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction	A source of job satisfaction	Neither a source of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction
Paid hours per week	38	4	38	38	30
Unpaid hours per week	20	-	5	4	5

^a includes centres managed by parents, churches or co-operatives. ^b includes corporate centres. ^c TAFE or university centres. ^d includes local councils. ^e Early childhood teacher.

The information in Table 3.1 was selected to provide the background characteristics of each interview participant. All interview participants were from medium sized centres (25-59 places) except for Jessica who was from a small centre (less than 25 places). All participants were experienced, working for more than 7 years in the sector.

Excerpts from the interviews that complemented the findings of the survey document the “voice” (Hirschman, 1970) of educators as presented in Chapter 4. The inherent subjectivity (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the process of selecting these voices is acknowledged; however they offer a “ground-up perspective” (Dalli, 2008, p. 174) that will contribute to an authentic exploration of the issues.

3.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the research design and data collection methods used in this study. A mixed-methods research approach was employed involving a survey distributed to

long day care centres in NSW and follow up interviews with self-nominated participants. The analysis of this data is presented in the following chapter with the aim of addressing the research questions underpinning this study.

Chapter 4. Results

This chapter contains the key findings of this study. The findings are based on the data from the survey and statements from the interviews to provide complementarity (Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010; Greene et al., 1989). The “voice” (Hirschman, 1970) of the educators in this study support and provide explanations for the arguments arising from the analysis of the quantitative data. In a sector that appears reluctant to articulate dissatisfaction (Lyons, 2003) the interests expressed by these educators are particularly valuable as they “reflect the reality” (Dalli, 2008) of their lived experiences.

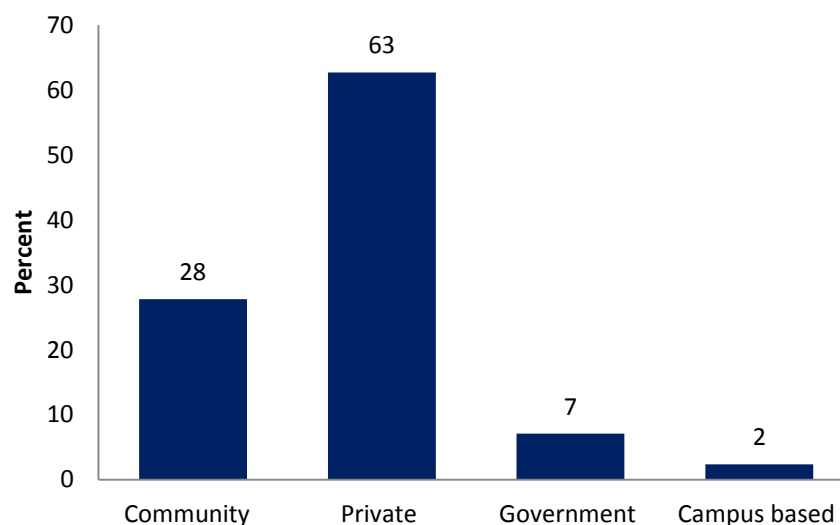
4.1. Contextualising the Study

4.1.1. Characteristics of the workplaces.

The survey captured a variety of information about the characteristics of centres and the job roles and responsibilities performed by educators employed to carry out both administrative and educative work. Most participants ($n=81$, 64%) reported working in medium size centres (25-59 licensed places) and nearly a fifth ($n=26$, 21%) were from large centres (60-80 licensed places). Less than 7% each worked in either small centres licensed for less than 25 children ($n=9$) or large centres with a licensed capacity for more than 80 children ($n=10$, 8%). With respect to geographic location, just over two thirds of participants ($n = 85$) were from urban or metropolitan based centres.

Just over half ($n=65$, 52%) of the survey participants worked for small, stand-alone organisations whilst 21 (17%) were employed by a large organisation that managed over 10 centres. Approximately one third ($n=40$) were categorised as medium size organisations that managed between 2-9 centres. Figure 4.1 shows participants according to the type of management structure under which their centres were governed.

Figure 4.1. Participants by centre management type.^a



Note. ^a Community based centres includes centres managed by parents, churches or cooperatives; Private centres including corporate centres; Government centres includes those owned by local councils; Campus based centres include TAFE or University centres.

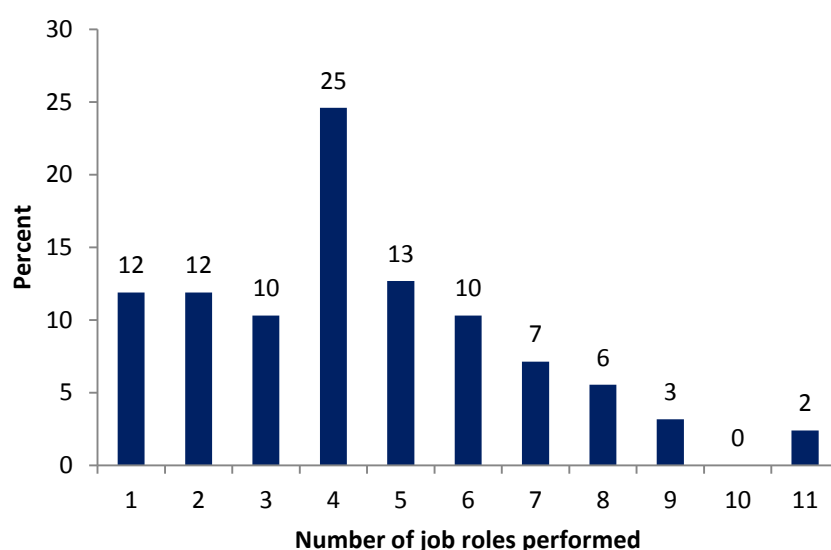
There were more than double the number of participants from private centres ($n=79$, 63%) in comparison to the number from community based centres ($n=35$, 28%). Less than 10% of the sample of participants was employed at government ($n=9$) and campus based ($n=3$) services.

4.1.2. Roles and responsibilities of educators.

The job roles being performed by participants were many and varied. On average, each participant reported being engaged in at least four job roles that required paperwork

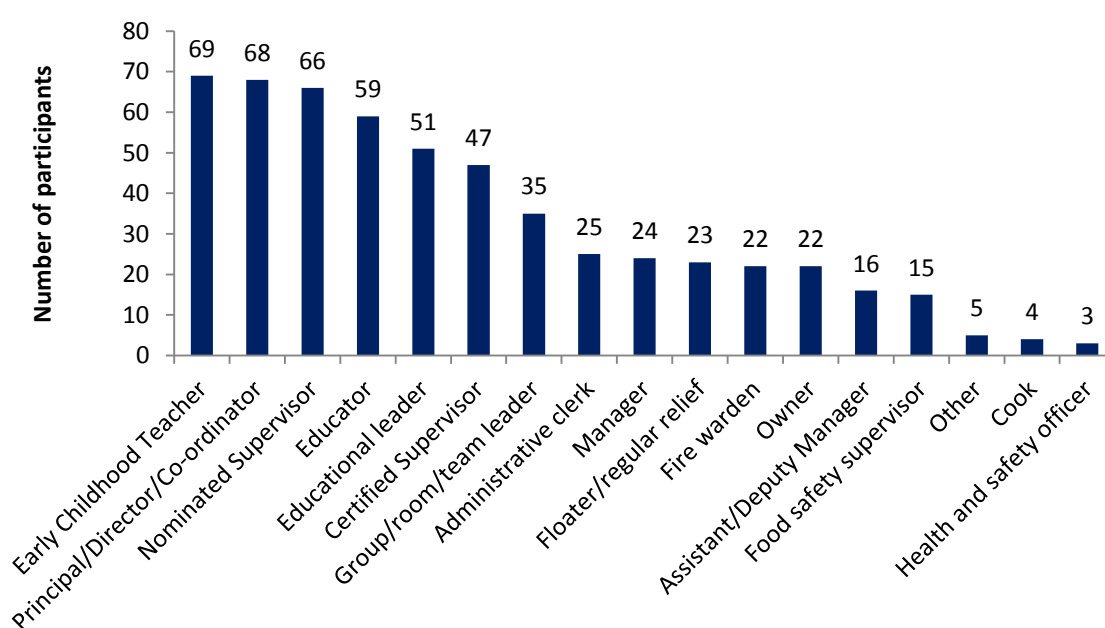
(Figure 4.2). The most common combination included the roles of principal/director/co-ordinator, nominated supervisor, early childhood teacher and educator.

Figure 4.2. Number of job roles nominated as requiring paperwork.



The frequency of the types of roles that were nominated is provided in Figure 4.3. While there may be a great deal of overlap in the duties required in these roles, the various roles may also represent additional responsibilities.

Figure 4.3. Number of participants undertaking job roles requiring paperwork.



Over half of participants were early childhood teachers ($n=69$, 55%) and/or the principal, director or co-ordinator at their centre ($n=68$, 54%). Just over 40% of participants ($n=51$) identified themselves as the Educational Leader at their centre. Therefore, most of the participants in this study performed leadership or management roles and responsibilities within their centres.

4.1.3. Paid and unpaid work.

Table 4.1 summarises the results relating to the paid and unpaid hours worked by participants each week. Nearly three quarters of the participants (71%) reported being paid for hours that equated to working on a full time basis comprising a range between 35 to 40 hours each week.

Table 4.1. Categories of paid and unpaid work in hours.

	Paid hours per week	Paid hours to complete paperwork	Direct hours with children	Hours spent completing paperwork while working directly with children
<i>N</i>	126	126	126	126
Mean	36.5	11.1	23.8	3.2
Median	38.0	6.0	24.0	2.0
Mode	38.0	2.0	38.0	0.0
Std. Deviation	9.1	11.2	10.9	4.8
Minimum	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0
Maximum	68.0	40.0	45.0	38.0

On average, participants received just over 11 hours a week to complete paperwork and worked just under 24 hours each week as educators working directly with children.

Only 38 participants (30%) reported that they did not combine administrative tasks with educative care responsibilities. On average participants reported they completed 3.25 hours per week of paperwork while working with children. Comments from the interviews indicated that these duties included filling in forms about children's routines, completing observations, learning stories, incident reports and daily diaries. However, there was a strong indication in the interviews that many educators felt that administrative duties and educative care work should not be combined. Ellen captured this sentiment by reflecting on the interaction of administrative and educative care responsibilities as follows:

Taking educators away so that educators can write [things down]... that's taking away from all of those educational opportunities that children should have had from us. And that's why they're there. They're not there to watch us writing things down.

The overwhelming majority of participants ($n=106$, 84%) reported that they regularly completed paperwork without pay. This work could be as little as half an hour of paperwork to as much 25 hours of work per week that was unpaid. One explanation of why educators may perform unpaid work was provided by Jessica who spent close to one-fifth of her time working without pay. She explained that she tends, "to prioritise the children first and so consequently I am with the children and the paperwork is the extra hours." Again, this reinforces the notion that educators do not see combining administrative duties with educative care responsibilities as desirable. Issues relating to the amount of unpaid work being performed and the practice of combining educative care work and administrative tasks are discussed in section 5.3.

The number of unpaid hours completed each week was converted to a percentage of paid hours to provide an understanding of the proportion of time that centre staff allocated to administrative duties without pay (Table 4.2). During a follow up interview, one

participant explained that her unpaid paperwork hours greatly exceeded the amount of paid hours each week. She clarified that while paid hours may be significantly lower than the actual total hours she worked each week centre owners, like herself, were then able to access any profits at the end of the year. Therefore, remuneration for administrative work conducted by centre owners needs to be considered differently to employees who receive a regular wage or salary.

For this reason, the data in Table 4.2 was divided between people who identified themselves as centre owners and those who did not. As can be seen, the results of the analysis of unpaid time as a percentage of paid time varied considerably between centre owners and non-owners. Centre owners reported completing on average 29% of their total paid time working without pay, while non-owners averaged 18% of their paid time working without pay. However, the most commonly reported hours (mode values) were nearly identical (13.2% for owners and 12.5% for non-owners). From these data it can be seen that, for most educators, an appreciable part of their administrative work was conducted without pay.

Table 4.2. Unpaid hours and unpaid hours as a percentage of paid hours.

	Unpaid hours completing paperwork	Unpaid paperwork hours as a percentage of paid hours – total	Unpaid paperwork hours as a percentage of paid hours- excluding owners	Unpaid paperwork hours as a percentage of paid hours- owners only
N	104	103 ^a	83	20
Mean	6.9	20.0	17.9	28.8
Median	5.0	15.6	15.0	20.0
Mode	5.0	13.2	13.2	12.5
Std. Deviation	5.1	20.2	12.8	37.1
Minimum	0.5	1.3	1.3	5
Maximum	25.0	178.6	75.0	178.6

^a the percentage was unable to be calculated for one of the responses as the paid hours given was "0".

There were a variety of other reasons participants in the interviews suggested as to why educators may work without pay. Alison talked about the reasons that she did not receive paid hours to complete paperwork:

Well it's a budgetary decision really. Our funding has been cut back... we used to have three staff... but... we only have two staff because monetary wise it's not worth having a third person according to the big people with the budget so therefore it means we don't have a third person who can take over my role... So it makes it really difficult.

Another educator discussed the relationship between budgetary constraints, unpaid hours and quality ECEC practice stating:

I think it is very hard to fit in admin duties when the centre can only afford sufficient staff to maintain the legal child-staff ratio. I would prefer to volunteer my home time to do admin tasks rather than risk the quality of the program or the safety of children (SP. 66).

This demonstrates the way in which some educators feel that unpaid work is required to provide quality care. This was a repeated theme in the interviews. As Kate put plainly:

You're a professional, you want to have a professional standard. And this is why early childhood will always be, excuse the French, screwed over because we will do what needs to be done for the children in our care regardless of if it's in our own time or not.

Other comments from the interviews evidenced the fact that some educators rationalise and justify the unpaid work that they do by saying that it is their choice because they desire to produce quality work. For example, Jackie spoke of choosing to "work at a different level", Kylie discussed a "higher level of quality" and Mary talked about "how much people

want to bring to it" (the job). An implication of these statements is that quality work requires more paid time than many educators were allocated in their current workplaces. Educators' attitudes towards their jobs are discussed in the next section.

4.2. Educator Attitudes

This section presents both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the surveys and interviews pertaining to participants' attitudes about their jobs in general and about their administrative responsibilities in particular. It begins with an analysis of data based on seven attitude statements from Question 17 included in the survey.

4.2.1. Attitude statements towards the job.

The questions on attitudes towards the job (the attitude statements) were replicated from the *Census* with the exception of the statement about the participant's views of the importance of their job in relation to the impact it has on children and families. A summary of the results is shown in Table 4.3. A comparable percentage of participants in this study (90%) and those who participated in the *Census* (85%) agreed that they were satisfied with the job. There was also little difference in perceptions of the supportiveness of management in this study (80%) and the *Census* (78%). Slightly higher percentages of participants agreed that they were satisfied with pay and conditions (48%) than in the *Census* (40%).

Similarly, participants in this study were also more positive about the spirit and team morale in their workplace (86% compared with 76% in the *Census*). In contrast, while slightly over half (53%) of participants in the *Census* agreed that their job was important to them because of the high status and positive recognition that they received in the community,

less than half of the participants in this study (41%) agreed with this perspective. The greatest contrast between results was in respect of the participants' agreement to the statement that the job is stressful. While only 57% of participants from long day care centres in the *Census* agreed with the statement, in this study, 78% of participants agreed. Again, this may be a reflection on the fact that many of the participants in this study were in positions involving leading or management responsibilities.

Table 4.3. Participants' responses to attitude statements.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
I am satisfied with my job	40	32	73	58	8	6	3	2	2	2
I am satisfied with my pay and conditions	17	14	43	35	31	25	26	21	9	7
There is good spirit and team morale in my workplace ^a	48	38	60	48	10	8	8	6	0	0
Management are supportive	54	43	47	38	19	15	6	5	0	0
My job is important to me because it has high status and I receive positive recognition in the community	19	15	33	26	31	25	30	24	13	10
The job is stressful	51	41	47	37	20	16	6	5	2	2
My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families	91	72	31	25	4	3	0	0	0	0

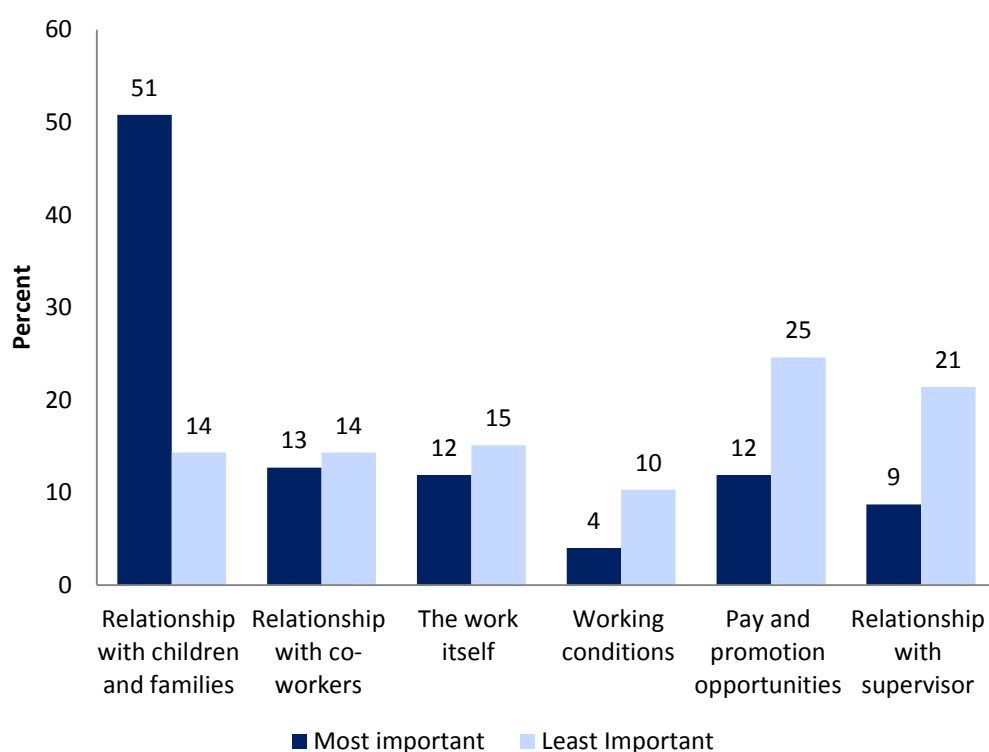
Note. *N* = 126. ^a This question was based on the *National Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Census 2013: Child Care and Preschool Staff* survey as it appeared online. When the results of the *Census* were published the word "a" was inserted before "good".

Overwhelmingly, 122 (97%) participants agreed with the statement "My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families." Not a single participant disagreed with this statement and only four (3%) participants opted for the neutral response.

4.2.2. Relative importance of facets of the job.

The fourth part of the survey, which was based on categories identified in the ECJSS (Bloom, 2010), with the additional category of “relationships with children and families” asked respondents to rate aspects of their job from least to most important. Figure 4.11 shows each category with the percentage of participants who rated each aspect as either least or most important. More than half ($n=64$, 51%) of participants rated relationships with children and families as most important. The item most often cited as least important were participants’ pay and promotion opportunities ($n=31$, 25%).

Figure 4.4. The most and least important aspects of the job.



Note: Due to rounding, the proportions do not add up to 100 per cent.

The frequency of each score for each category was multiplied by the score itself to produce a number that could then be ranked. The effect of this process was to give each item an

overall score based on the importance accorded to it by each participant in respect of each category.

Table 4.4. What is most important – ranked scores.

Ranking	Category	Score
1	Relationship with children and families	580
2	Relationship with co-workers	456
3	The work itself	454
4	Working conditions	401
5	Pay and promotion opportunities	383
6	Relationship with supervisor	367

As can be seen in Table 4.4 the scores show that, overall, relationships with children and families was ranked as most important to participants and relationships with supervisors, the least.

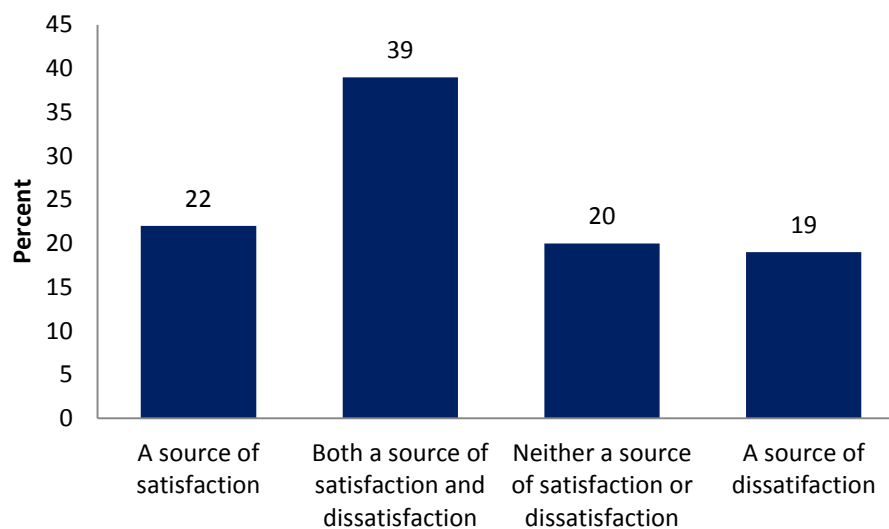
4.2.3 Attitude statements towards administrative requirements.

Participants were also asked to rate their agreement with statements about paperwork as a source of job satisfaction. Rather than simply ask participants the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements and providing them with a single neutral category; the neutral category was divided and two further options as shown in Figure 4.5.

In this instance the majority of participants chose a neutral response, with nearly twice as many ($n=49$, 39%) considering paperwork to be both a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction than neither a source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction ($n=25$, 20%). Only four

participants reported that paperwork was a major source of satisfaction for them, with three times that many considering paperwork to be a major source of dissatisfaction.

Figure 4.5. Paperwork as a source of job (dis)satisfaction.



In this study, there was clear evidence of educators regarding administrative responsibilities from a dual perspective. For example, one educator commented, “some paperwork is useful and worth keeping up with but a great deal is just to satisfy the bureaucracy with no improvement to operation or quality.” (SP. 86) Another said, “[p]aperwork is necessary but currently is too much” (SP. 12). Mary, who reported that paperwork was neither a source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for her, stated that:

Paperwork that makes sense is OK. And I know it helps with the overall picture of what you’re doing... It increases your knowledge of what’s going on both within your centre and within the broader context... then obviously you get paperwork that just seems over the top, unnecessary.

Each of these commentaries provides support for the way in which educators experience administrative work as both constructive and undesirable.

For educators who experienced dissatisfaction as result of their administrative requirements, the possibility of negative consequences for both themselves and the children in their centre was raised in the interviews. Jessica, for example, talked about her struggles with achieving a balance:

I used to do a lot of extra hours at the centre prior to opening and closing but I... decided that I shouldn't be doing that... I've actually got to balance work, professional life and a personal life and if I need extra [time], maybe I should just be getting a casual in, but you know, that's easier enough said than done.

Alison was very aware of that paperwork could potentially affect her work with the children and had made changes with her program to address it. She reflected on the situation that led to the changes:

It's mentally draining as well, having to do all of the paperwork. After a while you do become mentally drained and you get tired, you don't have that mental energy to be with the children to be able to extend on their learning as much as you could...

For these educators, burdensome administrative duties have implications for their wellbeing and their ability to deliver quality ECEC programs. This is discussed further in section 5.3.

4.2.4. Understanding particular aspects of administrative satisfaction.

The sixth part of the survey was designed to measure facets of the construct administrative satisfaction and consisted of 22 statements (5 of which, due to their wording were items to be reverse scored). The scale had a high level of internal consistency, as

determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.876. That is, each of the statements was shown to be a reliable measure for the same construct, administrative satisfaction. A summary of the results is shown in Table 4.5.

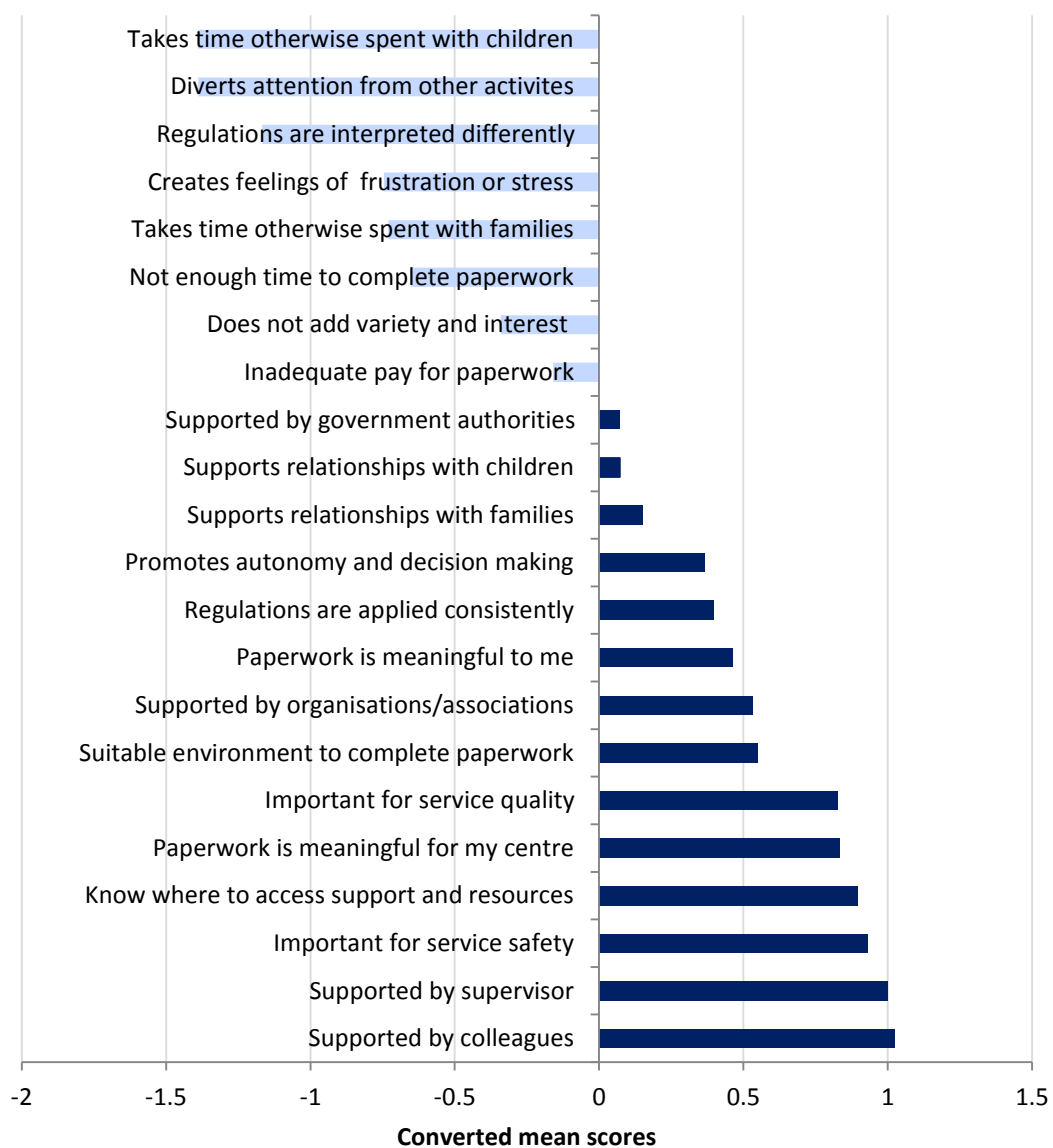
Table 4.5. Attitudes towards aspects of administrative work (survey responses)

	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean score
Professional practice and administrative work				
Paperwork is meaningful to me	54	32	14	2.54
Paperwork is meaningful for my centre	78	12	10	2.17
Paperwork is important for service quality	72	15	13	2.17
Paperwork is important for service safety	79	10	11	2.07
Paperwork promotes my autonomy and professional decision making	51	27	22	2.63
Completing paperwork adds variety and interest to my day	24	30	47	3.34
Completing paperwork makes me feel frustrated or stressed	63	26	11	3.75 [#]
Support and administrative work				
I am supported by my colleagues	83	12	6	1.98
I am supported by my supervisor	74	22	6	2.00
I am supported by government authorities	41	31	29	2.93
I am supported by organisations that my centre or I belong to	59	28	14	2.47
I know where to access support and resources about the paperwork I am legally obliged to do	79	12	9	2.10
Pay, conditions and administrative work				
I am paid adequately for the paperwork I do	36	22	42	3.16
I have enough time to complete my paperwork	21	18	61	3.65
I have a suitable work environment to complete my paperwork	65	18	18	2.45
Relationships and administrative work				
Completing paperwork diverts my attention from other activities	91	6	3	4.39 [#]
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with the children	87	9	5	4.39 [#]
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with children	37	32	31	2.85
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with families	64	19	18	3.73 [#]
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with families	44	31	25	2.93
Application and Interpretation				
The regulations are applied consistently	58	12	30	2.60
The regulations are interpreted differently by different people	86	10	5	4.17 [#]

Note. # Indicates reverse scoring.

A mean score based on the ratings given by the participants to each item was also calculated to allow for comparison between the facets. The mean scores were then converted to a value between -2 and +2. This assisted in providing a clear delineation between items which participants were positive about and those which they regarded negatively (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. Positive and negative attitudes towards paperwork by mean score ^a



Note. ^aThe wording of these items, taken from questions 25 to 29, has been modified where necessary to reflect the positive or negative nature of participants responses and improve the readability of the figure.

Negative attitudes towards aspects of paperwork

Overall, the results displayed in Figure 4.6 suggest that the survey participants perceived paperwork as diverting their time from other activities especially those involving educators' work with children and families. The diversionary nature of paperwork was something that Jessica was also conscious of:

I think sometimes we do get caught up in the paperwork. I need to do the paperwork, I need to do it and sometimes I think, ooh look it's nice and quiet I'll just go sit at my desk and do it while the children are playing, but that's the time they're engaged and that's the time I should be sitting down with them and seeing what they've got to tell me.

Ellen also talked about the implications of these kinds of practices for children based on her own experiences by saying that, "most certainly the children who would rather be engaged in play during rest time are being denied that because the educators need to use that time to write up this information and show evidence of our program." For other educators, the diversionary aspects of their administrative requirements were a reality of practice in ECEC. One educator noted that:

It seems ironic that, for educators with primary face to face time with the children, that in order to prove their quality care and education of children, they must engage in amounts of paperwork that detract from their care and education time with the children. (SP. 90)

The results also indicate that paperwork was perceived by participants to be a source of stress and frustration which did not add variety or interest to an educator's day. One source of stress and frustration identified in the interviews resulted from the uncertainty

surrounding what was considered as sufficient by educators to meet their obligations. As Rebecca explained:

Especially with older educators, there's a lot of insecurity about their own work, so although they're fantastic at what they do and I wouldn't expect anything else, it's that comparison with, 'oh, that person writes better than me' or 'what if it's not right?' and it's that kind of fear of getting it wrong and having that documented forever with your name on it that's a lot of pressure.

Likewise, Angela expressed her uncertainty about paperwork and whether, "it's meeting the standards, if what we're doing is the right way of doing things, if it's meeting the expectations. I feel that's one aspect that brings on stress". Another educator commented, "Paperwork is all consuming as there is a general fear of not doing enough" (SP. 102). For Jackie, it was competing demands of the job that made paperwork a source of stress for her.

In addition, the results of the survey suggested that these educators did not consider themselves adequately paid for the time they spent on paperwork. Kate shared her knowledge of the practice at some centres of not providing additional paid time for paperwork saying, "The award at the moment only stipulates 2 hours must be given per week per educator and I know, I *really* know that there are places out there that don't even do that for their staff." This was confirmed by another educator who said that at her centre staff had previously been given paid paperwork time but after a change of ownership, staff received *none*.

Lack of time to complete administrative requirements was a factor that was raised repeatedly by participants. This was an issue which had troubled Rebecca who had actively researched what other centres were doing and investigated the requirements in the

regulations. Then, after discussions with her team and the families at her centre, took what she described as a “risk” and made a decision to dramatically reduce the amount of paperwork being undertaken, albeit making that which was done more meaningful, detailed and deliberate. Rebecca was asked whether she had observed changes in the staff; whether they were happier. She replied, “Yes, because that’s what you get into child care for. You don’t get into child care for documentation. You don’t get into child care for paperwork.”

Issues relating to pay and time were very much linked. As one educator succinctly explained, “[p]aperwork is only a source of stress as we are not given enough time to do what is needed to do. Paperwork is important and should be done but owners need to give staff time to do it” (SP. 122). The connectedness between aspects of administrative practice is discussed in section 5.3.

Positive attitudes towards aspects of paperwork

The results shown in Figure 4.6 suggest that some educators surveyed felt positive about many aspects of their administrative practice, in particular, those related to support received from supervisors, colleagues, professional associations and to a lesser extent, government authorities. Paperwork was regarded as important for contributing to service quality and safety and something that was meaningful for the educators themselves as well as their centres. In an interview, Kylie discussed the ways in which paperwork was meaningful to her saying, “I like expressing that [the value of the work] for the parents, I think it makes your work more valuable to them... That you’re not just a babysitter.”

Another educator also reflected on the meaningfulness of paperwork:

Observations on children and their learning experiences is the only paperwork that I get job satisfaction from and believe it is the most meaningful type of paperwork as it is dynamic and serves the purpose of communication with families as well as informing educators of the strengths and weaknesses of the child (SP. 118).

Further, paperwork was generally perceived by respondents as promoting their autonomy in decision making. This was not in the sense about the tasks educators would do, but rather, in the freedom to express their identity as professionals and make decisions about how they would fulfill their administrative requirements. For example, Ellen spoke with pride about her centre's philosophy statement and Jenny about the document which defined her organisation's culture. Kate discussed the way in which she made children's learning visible for families. While administrative requirements are mandatory, these educators recognised that they were not necessarily always prescriptive.

4.3. Investigating Associations between Variables

This study set out to explore how administrative responsibilities may influence the job satisfaction of educators working in long day centres in NSW. Using data from the online survey, relationships between variables are examined and the findings are presented in this section.

4.3.1. Administrative satisfaction, job satisfaction, paid and unpaid hours and facets of administrative satisfaction.

Correlation analyses were performed to explore associations between administrative satisfaction, job satisfaction, paid and unpaid hours and facets of administrative satisfaction (see section 3.4.1). As Table 4.6 shows, there were significant correlations between job satisfaction and each of the positively framed attitude statements yet there were no significant correlations between these statements and administrative satisfaction. Therefore, while aspects of a job such as pay and conditions, management support and relationships with children and families were related to job satisfaction, in this study there was no significant relationship between these and administrative satisfaction. In addition, no significant associations were found between administrative satisfaction and paid hours ($r_s = -.11, p = .241$) or unpaid hours ($r_s = -.17, p = .077$).

Although the majority of participants (61%) experienced administrative work to be a source of dissatisfaction to some extent, there was no significant correlation between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction ($r_s = -.03, p = .633$). This result is discussed in section 5.2. It is important to note that evidence of expressions of “loyalty” (Hirschman, 1970) in which educators endure the demands of the job with the expectation that their situation will improve was found in the educators’ responses during the interviews. For example, Rebecca stated that:

At the moment I’m only off the floor one day a week, but that kind of comes and goes and varies depending on the staff we have here, so at one stage this year I was two and half days and next year I’ve managed to get three days off the floor.

This positive outlook may provide one reason why, for some educators, dissatisfaction with administrative work did not influence overall job satisfaction.

Table 4.6. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and general attitude statements.

		Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Attitude statements			
I am satisfied with my job	r_s	.04 [-.16 - .23]	1
	p	.63	
I am satisfied with my pay and conditions	r_s	-.03 [-.23 - .15]	.487** [.298 - .652]
	p	.74	<.001
There is good spirit and team morale in my workplace	r_s	-.02 [-.17 - .19]	.42** [.26 - .56]
	p	.84	<.001
Management are supportive	r_s	-.005 [-.17 - .16]	.59** [.45 - .70]
	p	.96	<.001
My job is important to me because it has high status and I receive positive recognition in the Community	r_s	-.03 [-.24 - .17]	.34** [.18 - .48]
	p	.765	<.001
My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families	r_s	-.03 [-.21 - .14]	.31** [.15 - .46]
	p	.730	<.001
The job is stressful [#]	r_s	-.22* [-.40 - -.04]	-.10 -.26 - .08
	p	.013	.29

Note. $N=126$. [#] Denotes negatively framed statements. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

Tables 4.7 to 4.11, present the results of the correlation analyses between administrative satisfaction, job satisfaction and facets of administrative satisfaction. In these analyses, all but two aspects of administrative practice (support from management and colleagues, see below) were found to be significantly associated with administrative satisfaction but not with job satisfaction. These data show that with the aforementioned exception, each of the facets of administrative work that were identified in the survey, are significantly related to administrative satisfaction.

Most of the correlations found however, were only moderate (r_s is between .40 and .59). For example, in Table 4.7, it shows that administrative satisfaction was significantly and moderately related to the extent which participants perceived paperwork as meaningful for their centre, important for service quality, promoting autonomy and professional decision making, and adding variety and interest to their day. However, as can be seen in Table 4.7, there was a notable exception. The meaningfulness of paperwork to participants was found to be strongly associated (r_s is in between .60-.79) with administrative satisfaction. Comments from two of the survey participants illustrate this association. For example, in the survey, Leah said that paperwork was a major source of dissatisfaction for her. In the interview, Leah questioned the meaning of paperwork:

There's always little labels on things saying you haven't filled this out and you haven't done that and you need to catch up on this and I just think what for? Who is going to be looking at this? What is the value of it all? I just shake my head sometimes and think I wish I could toss it all out and go back to basics.

Conversely, Rebecca provided insight into why paperwork was meaningful for her:

A source of satisfaction is finding new ideas and getting to implement new things and moving forwards as a service and not just getting stagnant. I actually like doing the quality improvement plans and I'm one of these people who's constantly looking for ways to continuously improve.

Detailed discussion of this finding is contained in section 5.2.

Table 4.7. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and statements relating to professional practice and administrative work.

		Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Professional practice and administrative work			
Paperwork is meaningful to me	r_s	.62** [.51 - .70]	.20* [.020 - .355]
	p	<.001	.028
Paperwork is meaningful for my centre	r_s	.48** [.33 - .61]	.19* [.01 - .37]
	p	<.001	.037
Paperwork is important for service quality	r_s	.53** [.39 - .67]	.146 [-.05 - .33]
	p	<.001	.10
Paperwork is important for service safety	r_s	.38** [.15 - .49]	.176* [-.01 - .33]
	p	<.001	.049
Paperwork promotes my autonomy and professional decision making	r_s	.45** [.29 - .59]	.09 [-.10 - .27]
	p	<.001	.30
Completing paperwork adds variety and interest to my day	r_s	.53** [.39 - .66]	.03 [-.17 - .21]
	p	<.001	.74
Completing paperwork makes me feel frustrated or stressed [#]	r_s	-.43** [-.556 - -.284]	-.01 [-.19 - .17]
	p	<.001	.96

Note. $N=126$. [#] Denotes negatively framed statements. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

As mentioned earlier, while the perceived support from colleagues and supervisors were items which were found to be significantly related to job satisfaction, in this study, significant relationships with administrative satisfaction was not found (Table 4.8). The implication here is that these items do not contribute to an understanding of administrative satisfaction and in future studies, their omission appears warranted. Of the remaining aspects of administrative work in Table 4.8, the strongest significant relationship was found between administrative satisfaction and the extent to which participants felt supported by government authorities.

Table 4.8. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and statements relating to support and administrative work.

		Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Support and administrative work			
I am supported by my colleagues	r_s	.04 [-.13 - .21]	.26** [.05 - .44]
	p	.659	.003
I am supported by my supervisor	r_s	.15 [-.04 - .34]	.40** [.24 - .54]
	p	.103	<.001
I am supported by government authorities (for example, ACECQA and NSW Department of Education and Communities)	r_s	.48** [.35 - .60]	.11 [-.08 - .29]
	p	<.001	.24
I am supported by organisations that my centre or I belong to	r_s	.30** [.13 - .45]	.10 [-.08 - .29]
	p	.001	.25
I know where to access support and resources about the paperwork I am legally obliged to do	r_s	.23* [.04 - .40]	.14 [-.04 - .32]
	p	.010	.12

Note. $N=126$. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

Administrative work and the statements relating to pay conditions were found to be significantly related (Table 4.9). Although these correlations are weak (r_s is between .20 and .39) they provide insights into the way in which perceptions about pay, time and working conditions relate to administrative satisfaction. This issue is taken up in section 5.2.

Table 4.9. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and statements relating to pay and conditions.

		Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Pay, conditions and administrative work			
I am paid adequately for the paperwork I do	r_s	.24** [.08 - .40]	.16 [-.03 - .35]
	p	.006	.07
I have enough time to complete my paperwork	r_s	.26** [.08 - .42]	.19* [.02 - .40]
	p	.004	.036
I have a suitable work environment to complete my paperwork	r_s	.21* [.03 - .39]	.011 [-.18 - .20]
	p	.019	.91

Note. $N=126$. # Denotes negatively framed statements. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

Table 4.10 reports the results of the correlation analyses between administrative satisfaction, job satisfaction and aspects of administrative work that relate to relationships. Administrative satisfaction was significantly related to the extent to which participants perceived it as diverting them from other activities including their time with children and families. At the same time, there were also moderate significant correlations between administrative satisfaction and the belief that administrative requirements supported relationships with children and families. These results emphasise the way in which administrative requirements can be both sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Table 4.10. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and statements relating to relationships and administrative work.

	Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Relationships and administrative work		
Completing paperwork diverts my attention from other activities [#]	r_s -.47** [-.59 - -.32] p <.001	.16 [-.01 - .33] .07
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with the children [#]	r_s -.50** [-.61 - -.37] p <.001	.09 [-.07 - .25] .32
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with children	r_s .45** [.290 - .582] p <.001	-.02 [-.226 - .172] .83
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with families [#]	r_s -.41** [-.56 - -.24] p <.001	.028 [-.14 - .19] .75
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with families	r_s .47** [.32 - .60] p <.001	<-.01 [-.19 - .18] .98

Note. $N=126$. [#] Denotes negatively framed statements. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

With respect to the application and interpretation of regulations (Table 4.11), administrative satisfaction was significantly and positively related to participants' perceptions that the regulations were applied consistently. Conversely, there was a negative correlation between administrative satisfaction and the extent to which participants regarded the regulations as being interpreted differently by various authorities responsible for centre administration and accreditation. This was an unexpected outcome as the questions were intended as positively and negatively worded versions of the same concept.

Table 4.11. Spearman's rank order correlation analysis between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction and statements relating to application and interpretation of regulations.

		Administrative satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Application and Interpretation of regulations and administrative work			
The regulations are applied consistently	r_s	.30** [.13 - .46]	.03 [-.17 - .24]
	p	.001	.74
The regulations are interpreted differently by different people [#]	r_s	-.29** [-.45 - -.12]	.02 [-.15 - .21]
	p	.001	.79

Note. $N=126$. [#] Denotes negatively framed statements. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BCa bootstrap 95% CIs reported in brackets.

The reason for this result may also be attributed to the variation in participants' interpretation of the question as evidenced in the interview transcripts and highlighted dramatically by two of these participants in particular. Jessica explained her interpretation of the question with a reference to the regulations by stating, "it's a black and white document, isn't it? It's stated – what is needed. So therefore, it needs to be applied as a clear readable document that says exactly what you need, so therefore, it needs to be applied consistently." In contrast, but interestingly, through the use of the same idiom,

Alison discussed her perspective, reflecting on the inconsistency in the way regulations can be interpreted:

The interpretation tends to change based on the person. There're grey areas I find in the regulations. It's not that black and white as I think it should be, because if it's black and white you can say yes or no to it, but there's a lot of grey areas where it's left to interpretation.

Although the only strong significant relationship was found to be between administrative satisfaction and the meaningfulness of paperwork to the participant, each of the other significant correlations found were valuable. This is because as Ellis (2010) points out even findings with small effect sizes (where the strength of the relationship is moderate or weak) can be important when, for example, they affect many people or the effects may accumulate. In relation to this study, each of the correlations were important as they contributed to an understanding of how aspects of administrative work were related to administrative satisfaction as expressed by the educators participating in this study.

4.3.2 Differences in job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction based on centre characteristics (management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location) and participant qualifications.

Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were run to determine investigate possible differences in the job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction of participants based on centre characteristics (management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location) and participant qualifications (see Section 3.4.1). The results of the Mann-Whitney

U test are reported in Table 4.12. The job satisfaction (including responses to each of the attitude statements) and administrative satisfaction of participants in rural/remote and metropolitan centres were not found to be statistically significantly different.

Table 4.12. Differences in attitude statements and administrative satisfaction by geographic location (Mann-Whitney U Test)

	Geographic location of centre	
	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
I am satisfied with my job	1874	.44
I am satisfied with my pay and conditions	1815.5	.670
There is good spirit and team morale in my workplace	2025.5	.11
Management are supportive	1804.5	.58
My job is important to me because it has high status and I receive positive recognition in the community	1964.5	.24
My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families	1835.5	.62
The job is stressful	1548.5	.28
Administrative satisfaction	1975.5	.17

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H tests exploring differences between the job satisfaction and administrative job satisfaction based on management type, organisation size, centre size or qualification level are reported in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13. Differences between the job satisfaction and administrative job satisfaction based on management type, organisation size, centre size or qualification level (Kruskal-Wallis H tests).

	Management Type		Organisation size		Licensed places		Qualifications	
	$H(3)^a$	p	$H(2)$	p	$H(3)$	p	$H(4)$	p
I am satisfied with my job	11.55	.009**	1.17	.56	3.85	.28	6.49	.17
I am satisfied with my pay and conditions	14.49	.002**	3.09	.21	5.98	0.11	5.77	.21
There is good spirit and team morale in my workplace	0.24	.971	3.44	.84	6.64	0.08	2.74	.60
Management are supportive	9.97	.019*	9.71	.008**	2.26	.52	5.45	.24
My job is important to me because it has high status and I receive positive recognition in the community	3.16	.318	4.41	.11	3.20	.36	20.44	<.001**
My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families	5.12	.163	1.41	.50	3.76	.29	1.33	.86
The job is stressful	2.07	.559	4.46	.11	10.24	.017*	1.96	.74
Administrative satisfaction	8.45	.038*	4.78	.09	12.64	.005**	6.94	.14

Note. $N=126$. ^a H is the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic and the number beside it in the brackets () is the degrees of freedom. *Significant at the 0.05 level. **Significant at the 0.01 level.

As can be seen in Table 4.13, participants with diploma level qualifications (mean rank = 46.16) differed significantly from early childhood teachers (mean rank = 74.32) in their agreement with the statement relating to job status and community recognition ($r = -.34$, $p = .001$). This finding is analysed in Section 5.4. Significant differences were also found in perceptions of the job as stressful ($r = -.27$, $p = .014$) and administrative satisfaction, ($r = .31$, $p = .003$) between medium (25-59 places) (mean ranks = 58.24 and 57.39, respectively) and very large (81 or more places) centres (mean ranks = 93.05 and 30.90, respectively).

There were also significant differences in job satisfaction ($r = .27$, $p = .016$) and satisfaction with pay and conditions ($r = .33$, $p = .001$) between private (mean ranks = 56.65 and 56.01, respectively) and community-based centres (mean ranks = 76.26 and 82.76, respectively). Although the Kruskal-Wallis test found that administrative satisfaction was

significantly affected by management type ($H(3) = 8.45, p = .038$), pairwise comparisons did not reveal significant differences between any of the groups.

There were significant differences between private (mean rank = 56.32) and community centres (mean rank = 74.80), ($r = .24, p = .044$) and small (mean rank = 57.43) and large organisations (mean rank = 83.95), ($r = -.28, p = .006$) in perceptions that management were supportive, but not in any other group combinations. Most of the interview participants also indicated that they had experience with only one organisational type. Kate, who has worked for for-profit and not-for-profit services, compared her experiences saying:

The majority of my profession has been in community based... A lot more money was put back in towards the centre, a lot more support was given to staff. We had pretty much an unlimited training budget. Resources were really good, there was definitely more parental involvement in the centre.

Several of the interview participants shared anecdotes which cast a less than favourable light on for-profit services. These included cost-cutting measures which impacted both negatively on staff and children, such as inadequate meal budgets. While these assertions may enhance understandings of why job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay and conditions may be greater in not-for-profit centres, these examples are not generalisable to either the practices of for-profit or not-for-profit services on the basis of this study.

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this study. Although a significant relationship was not found between administrative satisfaction and job satisfaction, the majority of participants considered administrative work to be, at least in part, a source of dissatisfaction. Notably, many educators also regarded aspects of their administrative practice to be a source of satisfaction. With the exception of facets of administrative work relating to perceptions of support from colleagues and supervisors, each of the remaining facets was found to be significantly related to administrative satisfaction. Although geographic location did not yield differences in the job satisfaction or administrative satisfaction of participants, notable differences were found with respect to participants' qualification levels and service characteristics. A discussion of these findings takes place in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to present a reflective discussion of the results of this study. The complexities of educators' attitudes toward administrative requirements are emphasised in a discussion of its influence on job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction.

5.1. Job Satisfaction and Administrative Requirements

This study explored the relationship between job satisfaction and administrative requirements using two approaches: first, examining the association between job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction and second, asking participants directly about whether or not paperwork was a source of satisfaction for them. It may seem surprising that a correlation analysis did not reveal a significant association between job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction, when the majority of participants indicated that administrative requirements were to some extent, a source of job dissatisfaction for them. However, most participants also found administrative requirements to be a source of satisfaction. Research by Fenech et al. (2007) on the relationship between satisfaction with the regulatory environment and job satisfaction had an analogous result. While the regulatory environment was seen as a source of dissatisfaction, a significant association with job satisfaction was not found. These authors suggested two reasons for that outcome and this explanation resonates with the findings of this study.

Firstly, their results may have been an outcome of the mix of positive and negative attitudes towards the regulatory environment so that there was no overall effect on job

satisfaction. Evidence to support this was found in the comments of the educators who were interviewed. For these educators, administrative work was both a source of satisfaction especially in terms of its utility, and also a source of dissatisfaction - for example, the amount of paperwork that educators perceived was required.

Secondly, Fenech et al. (2007) referred to Lyons (2003) in proposing an explanation for the lack of an association between regulatory satisfaction and job satisfaction based on the ways in which educators respond to the demands of their jobs. Lyons (2003) argued that Australian ECEC staff appear to endure the demands of their jobs or simply leave rather than voice discontentment. Using Hirschman (1970) and Farrell's (1983) categorisations, educators' expression of their dissatisfaction is reflected through "loyalty" (that is, withstand negative aspects with the expectation that the situation will improve) or "exit" strategies (that is, resignation). As noted in the results chapter, statements made by educators in this study reflected "loyalty" strategies in which the educators expressed a belief that their situation would improve.

Both of these explanations as applied to this study appear plausible given that an educator's administrative satisfaction can vary in relation to their overall job satisfaction. In addition, for many educators, administrative satisfaction was not experienced simply as either positive or negative. As Sergiovanni (1967) has suggested, aspects of a job may be experienced as bipolar; that is, as both sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and this pattern has been established within ECEC job satisfaction research by those such as Bloom (1988). The majority of educators who participated in the online survey expressed administrative satisfaction using "neutral" categories in preference to exclusively positive or negative categories. The neutral categories provided options for participants to align with the position that paperwork was a source of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or neither. By

creating these three categories the multi-dimensionality of educators' attitudes towards administrative satisfaction were exposed. By exploring the particular facets of administrative satisfaction, the complexity of the issue was further highlighted.

5.2. Administrative Satisfaction in ECEC

When reflecting on the results of this study in relation to the facets of administrative satisfaction, participants were generally more positive than negative towards the nominated features of the job. Paperwork was regarded as important for service quality and safety, in supporting relationships with children and families and as a conduit for promoting educator autonomy in decision making. Most educators also agreed that their work was meaningful for themselves and their centres.

The association between meaningfulness or the perceived importance of work and job satisfaction has been well documented (Bloom, 1988; Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Boyd & Schneider, 1997; Fenech, 2006; Whitebook et al., 1990). In this study, the only strong, significant association amongst the facets was found between administrative satisfaction and the perceived meaningfulness of the educator's work. Several of the other facets in which moderate positive correlations with administrative satisfaction were found may also be interpreted as a source of meaning for educators. These include facets relating to the extent that paperwork was believed to add variety and interest to an educator's day and its perceived utility in supporting relationships with children and families.

The meaningfulness of a job is dependent on the extent to which an individual regards their work as having a positive impact on others (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Accordingly, survey participants who did not view their work as meaningful were more likely to also experience administrative work negatively. There were also other issues raised about the execution of administrative work as a way of achieving quality ECEC services. The survey comments and interviews revealed the uncertainty which some educators experienced in carrying out their administrative requirements. The foundation of this uncertainty appeared to be a lack of confidence in the sufficiency of their work in terms of organisational, sectoral and regulatory expectations. Interview participants raised concerns about the amount of paperwork being done reinforcing the need for government intervention in this area (ACECQA, 2013; COAG, 2009a; Education Council, 2014).

The lack of clarity about what educators are required to do and whether or not their efforts are sufficient in fulfilling administrative requirements is a problem. For the majority of educators in this study, this situation is also exacerbated by the perceived inconsistency in the interpretation of regulations by administrative officials. When the attainment of consistency is an acknowledged challenge for authorised officers from regulatory bodies whose duties include monitoring and enforcing compliance with regulatory requirements (Education Council, 2014; Productivity Commission, 2014), it follows that the difficulties which educators face in understanding their obligations are substantial.

5.3. Connections and Conflicts

Pay and time

The most problematic aspects of administrative requirements are not so much related to the work itself but rather to an interrelated set of industrial and operational issues. Put concisely, educators in this study felt that they did not have enough paid time away from

children to fulfil their administrative requirements which created stress and frustration. Within the interviews and survey comments the interconnectedness of pay and time was highlighted. For educators with both administrative and direct care responsibilities, satisfactory completion of these tasks required careful management. Repeatedly research has shown, and this study has confirmed, that for educators the most important aspect of their job is their work with children (Hayden, 1996; Lyons, 1997; Waniganayake et al, 1998). Inadequate paid time and the desire of educators to strive for quality or spend as much time as possible engaging with children may account for the staggering number of hours that educators spend completing work without pay.

Administrative duties were also found in this study to divert educators from their work with children, in some cases compromising their engagement with them. Indeed, the time that educators in this study reported completing paperwork while working directly with the children is an area of concern. The *National Regulations* specifies two components of “working directly with children”: physical presence of the educator and direct engagement in the provision of education and care (Regulation 13). While it was beyond the scope of this study to fully explore the legitimacy, manner and types of paperwork being completed, the results indicate that some educators were using substantial portions of their time with children to complete administrative tasks. As discussed in Chapter 5, educators explained that this was necessary in order to minimise the number of unpaid hours they worked.

Although industrial regulations such as the *Children’s Services Award 2010* and *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010* mandate a minimum of two hours paid, non-contact time each week for employees, this is limited to educators with program responsibilities. However, ECEC work involves many other administrative requirements such

as developing and maintaining policies, documenting fire drills, completing incident and medication reports and preparing documents required to be displayed, to name a few. Whether or not two hours per week is enough to complete paperwork, is another issue. There is also evidence that some employers were not observing even the minimum obligation to pay staff for their program development work.

Time and money

If one solution to these problems is to provide educators with paid time off the floor to complete their paperwork, why do they not receive it? Expectedly, interview participants cited financial constraints as the main reason. When forced to make a choice between their own and the children's interests due to budget limitations, it appears that educators in this study felt compelled to give in to doing the required administrative work without pay. Whitebook et al. (1990) point out in their research from the United States "[t]he most important predictor of the quality of care children received, among the adult work environment variables, was staff wages" (p. 7). These authors challenged the idea that money spent on staff meant that children were negatively impacted and instead pointed out the value of resources being directed at those who were providing care and education. As research also demonstrates an association between levels of remuneration and quality, it follows that quality within ECEC services cannot truly be realised until problems relating to job satisfaction and payment of staff are addressed (see Lyons, 1997).

Money and quality

Surprisingly, the very fact that educators regarded their work as meaningful and important may produce negative outcomes for the educators themselves. This is because their commitment to their work may overshadow elements of their job which they were dissatisfied with (Lyons, 2003), leaving them in a position in which employers, families and even governments were able to use this to their advantage. In what Simms (2006) labels as “the exploitation of vocational passion” (n.p.), educators perform their work and accept low pay and a stressful environment because their rewards came from the satisfaction that they derive from working with children (Murray, 2000). It is a form of emotional labour (Seery & Corrigan, 2009) in which educators suppress their own interests (Jovanovic, 2013) when they perceive a conflict with altruistic notions of professionalism.

Regulation is seen as a means to ensure quality and administrative work and documentation is seen as a way to evidence it (ACECQA, 2014). When the costs associated with the provision of ECEC increase as a result of regulation there is evidence from the United States to suggest that it is educators that bear the financial burden (Blau, 2007) and demonstrate their commitment, particularly in respect of the wellbeing of the children, by withstanding poor working conditions (Bretherton, 2010). It is imperative then that educators are able to separate the business of ECEC from its education objectives (cf Lyons, 2003). Reluctance to do so may reflect educators’ desire to appear professionally committed or concern that in standing up for self-interests (such as adequate pay), children and families could be negatively impacted through higher fees (Jovanovic, 2013).

As Osgood (2006) notes the culture of ECEC is in part characterised by self-sacrifice. In this way, sacrifice becomes the hallmark of the ECEC professional and educators bear the costs in terms of sacrifices to their wellbeing and quality of life. That educators felt that they

were in a position in which they must choose between being paid for the work they do or engaging directly with children was in itself an astounding, but repeated, theme in statements from the survey and interviews. Stressful working conditions also have the potential to impact negatively on children (Kontos & Stremmel, 1988). Therefore, it is imperative that the wellbeing of staff is promoted to enhance the provision of quality ECEC services (Jeon, Buettner, & Snyder, 2014).

5.4. Universality of Issues

While overall there appears to be a commonality amongst educators' attitudes towards their job, there were some notable differences. Of those surveyed, educators from very large centres (81 or more places) had lower administrative satisfaction and viewed the job as more stressful than their counterparts in medium (25-59 places) size centres. While the reasons for this were not clear, it is an area worthy of future investigation.

Significant differences were also found between educators working in private and community-based services. Educators from community-based services were more satisfied with both their jobs and their pay and conditions. Research evidence suggests that quality in not-for-profit and government services is generally higher than in for-profit services (Productivity Commission, 2014; Whitebook et al., 2014). Research from the United States shows that staff in not-for-profit services have lower rates of turnover and higher wages (Whitebook et al., 2014). It has been asserted that when services are motivated by profit, educators' job satisfaction may be compromised when their interests conflict with their employers' business motives of financial gain (Rush, 2006); however, there is an absence of

statistical evidence to support this. In Australia, with approximately two-thirds of long day care centres in private ownership (Productivity Commission, 2014) and the corporatisation of the ECEC sector (Press & Woodrow, 2005) this is an area that warrants further investigation.

The other important difference between educators in this study was that degree trained teachers were more inclined to view their job as important in comparison with diploma level educators. This was based on participants' perceptions of the high status and positive recognition of degree level qualified teachers. Although, as noted in Chapter 1, the ECEC workforce in Australia has become increasingly professionalised (Bretherton, 2010; Lyons, 2012), whether or not the term 'professional' should be extended to non-university trained ECEC educators is the subject of debate within the sector (see Fenech et al., 2010).

Discourses which argue in favour of narrow constructions of professionalism are by their nature exclusionary (see Lyons, 2012), whether or not they are justified. Further, as Warren (2013) points out, "[I]t is important to maintain critical awareness of ways a narrow focus on particular qualifications may reflect assumptions that only these qualifications provide such quality" (p. 193). The findings of this study indicate that diploma level educators did not regard themselves as valued or recognised as early childhood teachers by the community.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an interpretation of the results of this study with the aim of contributing to a deeper understanding of the ways in which educators in long day care centres perceive their administrative responsibilities. The complexity and interrelatedness

of several key issues has been noted in particular, the relationship between administrative work, pay and time. The apparent willingness of educators to place the interests of others before their own in the pursuit of quality was questioned in light of the negative implications for educators' wellbeing and quality service provision. The next chapter provides the conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This thesis examined the nature of administrative requirements within the context of ECEC services in Australia and the way in which they influenced the job satisfaction of educators who undertake both educative care and administrative responsibilities. The purpose of this study was to contribute to an understanding of the ways in which administrative requirements contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of individuals doing this work. The corollary is that this study can serve as a stimulus to reflect on the implications of how the administrative requirements of ECEC staff can influence the provision of quality ECEC services.

6.1. Key Findings, Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

6.1.1 RQ1: How do administrative requirements influence the job satisfaction of educators working in in long day centres in NSW?

- ***Key finding #1: Overall job satisfaction is not related to satisfaction with administrative requirements.***

Despite their problems and frustrations, this research has confirmed findings reflected in national data (SRC, 2013) that educators working in Australian long day care centres are overall satisfied with their jobs. Although this study found that administrative responsibilities were a source of dissatisfaction for the majority of educators, there was no significant relationship between job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction. This may be

explained by the fact that for many educators, administrative work was also a source of satisfaction. This is a new finding that has not been identified in previous research reviewed for this study (see Chapter 2).

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

The findings of this study suggest that educators were overall positive about their jobs. However, within the sector, turnover as an expression of job dissatisfaction remains a challenging issue (see for example Bretherton, 2010; Cumming et al., 2015; Jovanovic, 2013). As discussed in Chapter 2, there is an absence of reliable, current statistics on turnover rates and patterns in ECEC in Australia. As an expression of job dissatisfaction and given the potentially adverse implications of turnover for children, families and centres, it is imperative that research into this issue be conducted so that appropriate strategies can be put in place to enhance retention of well qualified and experienced staff.

6.1.2. RQ2: What attitudes do educators have about their work in general, and about their administrative responsibilities in particular?

- ***Key finding #2: Relationships with children and families are the most important part of an educators work.***

The majority of educators in this study experienced their jobs as stressful and were ambivalent or dissatisfied with their pay and conditions. Overwhelmingly however, educators agreed that their job was important to them because of its impact on the wellbeing of children and families. This was reaffirmed by the importance that educators attributed to their relationships with children and families above other aspects of their job including their pay and working conditions and relationships with supervisors and

colleagues. These findings explicitly suggest that educators' relationships with children and families are not merely an important aspect of their work, but for many, it is *the* most important aspect of their work. This finding affirms previous Australian research including studies by Hayden (1996), Waniganayake, et al. (1998) and Shepherd (2004).

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

Although this study demonstrated that relationships with children and families are fundamentally important to the work of many ECEC educators; in job satisfaction research, this aspect of an educator's work has been subsumed within broader categories. For example, in the ECJSS respondents were questioned about their perceptions that they were respected by parents and the difference they make to students which formed part of "The Work Itself" facet (Bloom, 2010, Appendix A). The findings of this study raises the question as to whether or not the importance attributed by an educator to their work with families and children merits more distinct treatment in job satisfaction research in ECEC. Further research is needed to determine the way in which this aspect of an educator's job influences their perceptions of other aspects of their practice, particularly when an educator has major teaching and administrative responsibilities as in the case of those who work in small centres with few staff.

- ***Key finding #3: Administrative requirements are seen as both a source of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction.***

An examination of facets of administrative responsibilities revealed the way in which educators perceive administrative work as both sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In terms of satisfaction, notably, the educators in this study viewed administrative

requirements as meaningful for their centre and important for issues of safety as discussed in Chapter 4. To a lesser extent, administrative requirements were also considered as a means by which autonomy in decision making and relationships with children and families could be enhanced.

Conversely, in terms of dissatisfaction, the educators in this study also experienced administrative responsibilities as a source of stress which diverted them from other activities including their work with children. Educators reported that they did not have enough time to complete essential paperwork and they did not receive adequate remuneration for the paperwork that they did outside paid work hours. For those completing unpaid work, on average, an extra one-fifth of their total paid time was spent working without remuneration.

Two primary reasons for completing paperwork in an unpaid capacity emerged. Firstly, educators suggested that paperwork was a necessity or essential work that had to be completed to meet compliance requirements. That is, paper work was part of their job responsibilities and it was up to them when and how this work was done. The second reason for doing unpaid paperwork was to not compromise their time engaging with children by using that time to do paperwork. Both of these reasons provide support for the notion that cultures of self-sacrifice (Jovanovich, 2013; Osgood, 2006) and/or exploitation (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; Fenech et al., 2008; Lyons, 2003) within the sector prevail.

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

The finding of this study in relation to the number of unpaid hours worked has important ramifications for educators. If educators want to improve their pay and conditions, it is incumbent upon them to think critically about their workplace roles and responsibilities in relation to the expectations of their employers. At the very least, educators should question

the workload allocated and the paid work hours available to complete the tasks expected of them on a regular basis. This is not only about the value of quality service provision to children and families, it is also about recognising and advocating the value of the work that they do by seeking fair compensation for it. A thorough investigation of this practice of unpaid work is essential in order to improve working conditions for educators employed within the sector.

- ***Key finding #4: Administrative and educative care duties are often combined.***

This study also revealed that some educators completed paperwork while working directly with children. While no assumptions about the nature or legitimacy of this work are made here, it is noteworthy in itself that the practice exists because of its potential to divert attention from other essential activities (Rush, 2006) involving children.

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

The finding in this study that many educators find paperwork as diversionary was reinforced by the large proportion (70%) of educators who reported combining their educative care and administrative roles and responsibilities. This practice raises questions about whether or not an educator's engagement with children is being compromised. Further research is necessary to ascertain the full extent and nature of this issue and the impact it has on educators, children and families. These findings also highlight the necessity to clarify the definition of "working directly with children" (*Education and Care Services National Regulations* Regulation, 13) in respect of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable practices that compromise the engagement with children. While prima facie, this may seem obvious, statements from the educators in this study evidence the fact that it is an area

which is interpreted differently within different centres.

- ***Key finding #5: The meaningfulness of paperwork has a strong significant association with administrative satisfaction.***

Although the perceptions and experiences of the educators in this study differed markedly, the meaningfulness or importance attributed by an educator to their work emerged as an important element of administrative satisfaction. The perceived meaningfulness of an educator's work was found to be strongly and significantly related to the levels of administrative satisfaction experienced. Therefore it appears that educators would consider paperwork more positively if it was consistently viewed as relevant, necessary, valued and manageable. Whilst this may have been the expectation held by employers, in reality as indicated by the educators participating in this study, the majority struggled to meet their paperwork or administrative requirements in a timely manner during paid work hours.

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

Given that meaningfulness was found to have the strongest association with administrative satisfaction in this study, the potential exists for employers and policy makers to enhance the perceptions of meaningfulness of workplace expectations as translated into daily work responsibilities of educators. This could be done through a thorough review of workload expectations and current administration practices and by identifying strategies designed to communicate the importance, necessity, relevance and benefits of particular types of administrative responsibilities. Further research is required to clarify educators' attitudes towards particular types of paperwork and the best ways to communicate meaningfulness.

6.1.3. RQ3: How do service characteristics (management type, organisation size, centre size and geographic location) and qualification levels, influence the job satisfaction and administrative satisfaction of educators?

- ***Key finding #6: Educators' attitudes towards aspects of their job varied significantly depending on the size of the organisation they worked for, the size of the centre and its management type.***

This study examined educators' attitudes towards their job overall and in relation to their administrative work to determine whether there were significant variations in responses based on educators' qualification levels or particular characteristics of the service. The analysis revealed significant differences between private and community-based services in several areas. Respondents from community-based services had higher levels of job satisfaction, were more satisfied with pay and conditions and perceived management as more supportive compared with their colleagues in private centres. Management was viewed as more supportive by educators from large organisations (comprising 10 or more centres) in comparison to those from small standalone organisations. The size of a centre where an educator worked was also found to be important. Educators from large centres (more than 81 places) regarded their jobs as significantly more stressful and reported lower levels of administrative satisfaction than their counterparts in medium sized centres (25-59 places).

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

These findings suggest that there may be important differences in the practices within long day care centres based on the abovementioned organisational and structural variations. Investigating these differences across Australia can extend our understanding of how

service provision may be enhanced. This knowledge can also be used to support ECEC employers and staff to manage their administrative roles and responsibilities more efficiently.

- ***Key finding #7: Diploma level educators were less positive about their professional status within the community compared with early childhood teachers.***

Although there were no significant differences found in the job satisfaction or administrative satisfaction of educators based on geographic location, degree trained educators were more likely than diploma level educators to regard their job as important because of the high status and positive community recognition they received.

Implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research

While the reasons for this are unclear, in order to promote the job satisfaction of all educators in the sector, further investigation is merited to identify the basis and potential solutions for this problem.

6.2. Limitations and Strengths

6.2.1 Limitations.

There were a number of limitations in this study that potentially impact upon the quality and generalisability of the research findings. These relate to the selection of participants and the distribution of the survey. As participation in this research was voluntary with respect to both the survey and the interviews, there is a potential for self-selection bias (Olsen, 2008) which can impact the analysis and subsequent interpretation of the findings. That is, people who felt strongly about the subject may have been more inclined to

participate in this research by completing the survey and volunteering for the interview. As a consequence, these participants may not accurately reflect the views and experiences of all educators who have both educative care and administrative responsibilities. In addition, there is also a possibility that educators with a different perspective may have been unable or elected not to participate in this research for a variety of reasons. This again has the potential to skew the results in relation to investigating the relationships between job satisfaction and administration issues.

A further limitation arose in respect of the distribution of the survey. Surveys were sent via email to the nominated email address available on a government website. It was then at the discretion of the person receiving the email to choose whether or not to complete the survey and/or decide whether they would distribute it to other eligible staff within their organisation. This potentially restricted the distribution of the survey to eligible persons within centres who may have been willing to participate.

The small number of participants in this study also limits the generalisability of the results. This is especially so with regard to the results of the comparisons between groups of participants; for example, there were only nine responses from educators in government based services and three from campus based services. Further, as this study was restricted to educators in NSW, all the findings may not be generalisable nationally because of variations in the administrative requirements identified within state and territory laws.

Another potential issue emerging from the participants' comments in the surveys and the responses in the interviews was that there appeared to be a focus on particular administrative responsibilities connected with planning and documenting children's learning. This is understandable as program preparation work is a core responsibility for educators working directly with children. However this study was concerned with all

administrative requirements and was targeted specifically at educators who had both educative and administrative responsibilities. It is not possible to identify precisely if the responses of some participants reflected only their views in relation to their direct work with children. Therefore, the study may have been enhanced by more detailed explanatory notes that expressly encouraged educators to reflect on a range of administrative tasks and this work could have been separated in terms of obligations to children, families and the employer organisation.

6.2.2. Strengths and importance to the sector.

The strengths of this study are its contribution of new knowledge and insights which extend the existing research base. This study is important for three main reasons. First, it has contributed to a better understanding of the influence of administrative responsibilities on the job satisfaction of educators in ECEC and, in doing so, has addressed an identified gap in related research. Second, it has provided new information on educators' attitudes towards administrative tasks and when and how these tasks are being performed. Third, for all ECEC stakeholders in Australia, this study can act as a stimulus to reflect on the plethora of regulatory changes and consequential administrative requirements expected of both employers and employees.

Administrative requirements are an increasingly important component of all educators' roles, and the way in which educators think and feel about this work has implications for their everyday practice, job satisfaction and overall wellbeing. The inclusion of educators with different levels of qualification in this study constituted an acknowledgement that administrative responsibilities are not the sole province of degree

qualified educators and that a comprehensive examination of who does what and when in relation to administrative tasks within services requires more careful attention.

Administrative responsibilities are an essential aspect of ECEC service provision. This study has shown that for many educators administrative requirements are, at least in part, a source of dissatisfaction. The reasons for this were multifaceted with various aspects of administrative work relating to its execution and perceived meaningfulness contributing to educators' negativity. This negativity has potentially deleterious consequences for quality service provision, not only for educators but for all ECEC stakeholders including children and families. The completion of administrative work therefore comes at a cost. The question remains however, is it educators who must pay for this cost?

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<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au>

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Appendix 1

Education and Care Services National Law: corresponding and adopting legislation

Jurisdiction	Legislation
Australian Capital Territory	Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011
New South Wales	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
Northern Territory	Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011
Queensland	Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011
South Australia	Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011
Tasmania	Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011
Victoria	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Western Australia	Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012

Source: Australian Children's Education and Care website at

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/National-Law>

Appendix 2

Survey

A copy of the survey questions from online survey appears next.

Before commencing the survey, please read the Participant Information letter. If you have not yet received this letter or would like more information about this study please contact:

Elizabeth Arrabalde
Co-Investigator
Ph: 0499 191 831
elizabeth.arrabalde@students.mq.edu.au
Faculty of Human Sciences, Institute of Early Childhood

1. Please select from the following:

- ☐ I agree to participate in this survey, having read and understood the Participant Information letter.
- ☐ I do not wish to participate in this survey

5%

Next

Long day care centre staff in NSW

2. Are you 18 years old or over?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Do you work in a long day care centre in NSW?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. Do you have direct responsibility for working with children each week?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Definition

"Direct responsibility for working with children" means that you are "physically present" and "directly engaged in providing care and education to the children" (Regulation 13, National Regulations).

5. Do you have some responsibility for completing paperwork for the centre each week?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Definition

"Paperwork" in this survey means administrative work that must be completed because there are laws that require you to do so. Paperwork includes the completion and preparation of documents using paper-based systems as well as digital methods like computers or ipads.

Examples of paperwork include maintaining policies and procedures, documenting educational programs, completing accident and medication forms, preparing prescribed information to be displayed, maintaining an immunisation register, preparing and reviewing quality improvement plans, maintaining and submitting information for the purposes of the Child Care Benefit (including attendances and vacancies); completing business taxation records and payroll.

10%

[Prev](#)[Next](#)

About you

6. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Intersex or indeterminate

7. What is your age?

- ☐ 18 to 19
- ☐ 20 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 39
- ☐ 40 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 54
- ☐ 55 years and over

8. How many years experience do you have working in early childhood education and care?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years
- ☐ 4 to 6 years
- ☐ 7 to 9 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

9. How long have you been employed in this job with this service?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years
- ☐ 4 to 6 years
- ☐ 7 to 9 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

10. What is the highest **early childhood** qualification level (as recognised by ACECQA) that you have obtained?

- ☐ Certificate III Level Qualification
- ☐ Diploma Level Qualification
- ☐ Early Childhood Teaching Qualification
- ☐ I do not hold a recognised qualification yet
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. Are you currently working towards obtaining a recognised early childhood qualification?

- ☐ Yes, a Certificate III level qualification
- ☐ Yes, a Diploma level qualification
- ☐ Yes, an Early Childhood Teaching qualification
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)

 15%

Prev

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Your role

12. What are your job roles? (Mark as many as apply).

- ☐ Owner
- ☐ Principal/Director/Co-ordinator
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Assistant/Deputy Manager or Second in charge/2IC
- ☐ Nominated supervisor
- ☐ Early Childhood Teacher
- ☐ Certified supervisor
- ☐ Educational leader
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Group/room/team leader
- ☐ Food safety supervisor
- ☐ Fire warden
- ☐ Administrative clerk
- ☐ Cook
- ☐ Floater/regular relief
- ☐ Please list any **other roles** that require you to complete specific paperwork.

20%

Prev

Next

Where you work

13. What is your centre's management type?

- ☐ Community (including centres managed by parents, churches or co-operatives)
- ☐ Private (including corporate centres)
- ☐ Government (including local councils)
- ☐ Campus based (TAFE or University)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

14. What is the size of the organisation you are working for?

- ☐ **Small** - it is a stand alone centre that is run independently of other child care services
- ☐ **Medium** - there are 2 to 9 centres which have the same owners or operator, or are part of the same organisation and share resources
- ☐ **Large** - there are 10 or more centres that have the same owners or operators, or are part of the same organisation and share resources

15. How many children is your centre licenced for?

- ☐ 24 or less
- ☐ 25-59
- ☐ 60 to 80
- ☐ 81 or more

16. Which best describes your centre's location?

- ☐ Urban/Metropolitan
- ☐ Regional/Rural/Remote



Prev

Next

Your overall satisfaction with your job

17. Thinking about your job, please evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am satisfied with my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my pay and conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is good spirit and team morale in my workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management are supportive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job is important to me because it has high status and I receive positive recognition in the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job is important to me because of the impact it has on children and families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job is stressful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30%

Prev

Next

What is important to you

18. Please rank how important these are to you starting with the **LEAST** important (1) through to the **MOST** important (6).

<input type="checkbox"/>	Relationship with co-workers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relationship with supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	The work itself
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working conditions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay and promotion opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relationship with children and families

35%

Prev

Next

Pay and time

In this section, information will be collected about the time you spend working. During the year, there may be times when the amount of work you do varies. If this is the case, please provide an estimate of your average hours worked.

19. How many paid hours do you work each week?

20. How many paid hours are you given to complete paperwork each week?

21. How many hours do you work directly with children each week?

22. How many hours during a week do you spend completing paperwork while working directly with children?

 40%

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Next

Unpaid paperwork

23. Do you regularly complete unpaid paperwork?

Unpaid work may include completing paperwork work during meal breaks, at home without pay, or at work without pay.

☐ Yes

☐ No

 45%

Prev

Next

Unpaid hours

24. On average, how many hours do you spend completing paperwork each week that are unpaid?

Unpaid work includes work completed during paid meal breaks, after hours or at home.

50%

PrevNext

Professional practice and administrative work

25. Please evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Paperwork is meaningful to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paperwork is meaningful for my centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paperwork is important for service quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paperwork is important for service safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paperwork promotes my autonomy and professional decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork adds variety and interest to my day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork makes me feel frustrated or stressed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55%

PrevNext

Support and administrative work

26. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

When completing paperwork

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am supported by my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am supported by my supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am supported by government authorities (for example, ACECQA and NSW Department of Education and Communities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am supported by organisations/associations that my centre or I belong to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to access support and resources about the paperwork I am legally obliged to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

60%

Prev Next

Pay, conditions and administrative work

27. Please evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am paid adequately for the paperwork I do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to complete my paperwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a suitable environment to complete my paperwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65%

Prev Next

Relationships and administrative work

28. Please evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Completing paperwork diverts my attention from other activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with the children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork takes time from me that I would have spent with families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Completing paperwork supports my relationships with families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70%

Prev Next

Application and Interpretation

29. Please think only about the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The regulations are applied consistently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The regulations are interpreted differently by different people. This question refers to interpretations by regulatory authorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75%

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Your thoughts overall...

30. Overall, which statement best describes the way you think and feel about paperwork in relation to your job?

	A major source of job satisfaction for me	A source of job satisfaction for me	Neither a source of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction	Both a source of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction	A source of job dissatisfaction for me	A major source of job dissatisfaction for me
Paperwork is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Prev Next

31. Would you like to add any comments about anything raised in this survey?



Prev Next

Feel like you have more to say?

To increase our understanding of the issues raised in this survey, we will be conducting short telephone interviews. The interviews will take approximately thirty minutes and will be conducted at a mutually convenient time. You are free to withdraw your participation in an interview at any time. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interview and verify that the information presented is accurate.

Your identity will remain confidential and anything which might identify you will be changed, modified or left out.

32. Please mark as many as apply.

Would you like

- ☐ To **participate** in an interview
- ☐ To **receive the results** of this study
- ☐ A **personalised certificate** acknowledging your participation
- ☐ None of the above - just go to the **end** of the survey



[Prev](#) [Next](#)

33. Your details

Name (Optional – Your name is only required if you would like it to appear on a personalised certificate or if you would like to participate in the telephone interview.)

Centre Name (Optional)

Email Address

Phone Number (If you are participating in an interview)



[Prev](#) [Next](#)



Certificate of Participation

Thank you for participating in research conducted through the
Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University.

Through your involvement you have contributed to the advancement
of knowledge and understanding in the early childhood sector.

Chief Investigator
Assoc.Prof. Manjula Waniganayake

Co-Investigator
Elizabeth Arrabalde

October 2014

Thank you for participating in the survey. The certificate above can be printed using your web browser. Simply right click the image and press print.



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Done

Appendix 3

Guiding questions for semi-structured interviews

1. Please tell me about the different roles you perform at the centre and the time you spend on these roles.
2. In the survey, many participants said that paperwork can be a source of satisfaction and a source of dissatisfaction. In what ways is can paperwork be a source of job satisfaction and/or job dissatisfaction?
3. You said that paperwork was a source of (dis)satisfaction for you – why?
4. In the survey many educators reported doing paperwork in their own time. Can you tell me why someone would do paperwork in their own time?
5. What makes paperwork a source of stress?
6. Some participants who were surveyed said that paperwork diverted their time from other activities. Have you noticed this?
7. What kinds of paperwork do you do while working with the children? (Optional)
8. To make your job more ideal, what changes or support would you like to have?
9. Can you please explain your answer about the application and interpretation of the regulations?

Appendix 4



ELIZABETH ARRABALDE <elizabeth.arrabalde@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201400632)(Con/Met)

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au>

Thu, Jul 24, 2014 at 10:56 AM

To: Associate Professor Manjula Waniganayake <manjula.waniganayake@mq.edu.au>

Cc: Ms Elizabeth Janette Arrabalde <elizabeth.arrabalde@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear A/Prof Waniganayake,

Re: "Administrative obligations and job satisfaction in child care centres in NSW"(5201400632)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 24th July 2014. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

A/Prof Manjula Waniganayake
Ms Elizabeth Janette Arrabalde

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 24th July 2015
Progress Report 2 Due: 24th July 2016
Progress Report 3 Due: 24th July 2017
Progress Report 4 Due: 24th July 2018
Final Report Due: 24th July 2019

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Simon Boag
Acting Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109
Ph: +61 2 9850 4197 Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Appendix 5

Information for survey participants



Institute of Early Childhood
Faculty of Human Services
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (02) 9850 9825
Fax: +61 (02) 9850 9890

Dear Colleagues,

You are invited to participate in

A study of job satisfaction and administrative obligations in child care centres in NSW.

The aim of the study is to investigate the way in which administrative obligations (paperwork) affect how educators working in long day care centres in NSW think and feel about their jobs.

There are many laws that early childhood educators must abide by and a lot of documentation that needs to be completed to comply with these laws. In addition to the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, there are many other laws which create administrative obligations for staff including workplace safety, taxation, food safety, immunisation and industrial relations laws. There is a noticeable lack of current research exploring how the paperwork associated with these legal requirements impacts on the way educators think and feel about their jobs.

How you can help

Firstly, I am seeking the contributions of educators from long day care centres in NSW to complete **an online survey**. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Any person over the age of 18 who spends some time working directly with children each week and completes paperwork is eligible to participate. The survey will ask you to provide very general information about yourself and where you work. It will then ask questions about your job and the paperwork that you do. It will also ask you to rate your agreement to statements about paperwork.

If you would like to contribute further, you can also choose to participate in a short (30 minute) **telephone interview**. This participation is also completely up to you and you are free to withdraw at any time. Up to six survey participants will be interviewed. The phone interview will explore issues raised in the survey in order to provide greater depth and dimension to the study. To improve the accuracy of the interview transcripts, your permission will be sought to use an audio recorder. Interview participants may choose whether or not they would like the interview to be recorded. All interview participants will be provided with an opportunity to review the transcripts.

Participation in the survey and the interview is completely voluntary. This includes educators who are presently studying at the Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University. You are

completely free to choose whether or not to participate and your decision will not result in any adverse consequences.

All data collected during this study will be stored securely at all times. Only Associate Professor Waniganayake and I will have access to this data. Where you choose to provide your details, data which is obtained will be kept confidential and presented in a way that no participant can be identified. The data collected may be presented in a thesis, at conferences or in journal articles.

If you participate in the data collection for this study, you are able to request a summary of the results of this research to be emailed to you.

Your participation is important to us.

When you have completed the survey, you will be able to automatically print a **Certificate of Participation** in this study. This certificate is evidence of practices consistent with the *National Quality Standard* (ACECQA, 2012), indicating that you have collaborated with Macquarie University to improve outcomes for children and families and that professional standards guide your practice, including the *Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics* (2006) which encourages staff to support research. If you wish to request a personalised certificate to be emailed to you, please provide the email address as indicated on the survey. Individuals who are participating in the interview will also go in a draw to win a set of two tickets to Event Cinemas.

The research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Master of Research under the supervision of Associate Professor Manjula Waniganayake, at the Institute of Early Childhood, at Macquarie University (email: manjula.waniganayake@mq.edu.au). If you would like any further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

To begin the survey, [click here](#)

I would be very grateful if you could please also pass on this invitation to other educators at your centre. The survey will be open for completion until 8 October, 2014.

With our sincere thanks for your participation in this research.

Elizabeth Arrabalde

Co-Investigator

Phone: 0499 191 831

elizabeth.arrabalde@students.mq.edu.au

Faculty of Human Sciences, Institute of Early Childhood

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project Ref No: 5201400632). If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone: [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 6

Information and documentation for interview participants



Faculty of Human Services
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (02) 9850 9820

Fax: +61 (02) 9850 9890

Dear Colleague,

Information about the *Job Satisfaction and Administrative Obligations in Child Care*

Centres in NSW Telephone Interview

Thank you for completing the *Job Satisfaction and Administrative Obligations in Child Care Centres in NSW* survey. Thank you also for agreeing to participate in a short telephone interview (approximately 20 minutes). The interview will be conducted at a time that is mutually convenient.

The phone interview will explore issues raised in the survey in order to provide greater depth and dimension to the study. To improve the accuracy of the interview transcripts, your permission will be sought to use an audio recorder. Interview participants may choose whether or not they would like the interview to be recorded. All interview participants will be provided with an opportunity to review the transcripts.

All data which is obtained will be kept confidential and presented in a way in which you cannot be identified. The data will only be accessed by Associate Professor Waniganayake and me. Participation is completely voluntary. This includes educators who are presently studying at the Institute of Early Childhood at Macquarie University. You are completely free to choose whether or not to participate and your decision will not result in any adverse

consequences. You are also free to withdraw from the interview stage of the study at any time without having to give a reason.

Individuals who are participating in the interview will go in a draw to win a set of two movie tickets to Event Cinemas.

This research is being conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Master of Research under the supervision of Associate Professor Manjula Waniganayake (Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University) Phone: 02 9850 9825 email: manjula.waniganayake@mq.edu.au. If you would like any further information about this study or the interview process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you would like to proceed, I would be grateful if you could please complete and sign the enclosed consent forms in the presence of a witness (both copies) and return the co-investigator's copy together with the preference form at your earliest convenience. The forms may be scanned or photographed and returned by email, or if you prefer, I can provide you with a reply paid envelope.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Arrabalde
Co-Investigator
Ph: 0499 191 831
elizabeth.arrabalde@students.mq.edu.au
Faculty of Human Sciences, Institute of Early Childhood

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome

PARTICIPANT CONSENT
(Participant copy – For you to keep)

**A Study of Job Satisfaction and Administrative Obligations in Child Care
Centres in NSW**

I, _____ (full name) have read and understood the information above,
and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in a
telephone interview, knowing that I can withdraw at any time without consequence. I have been
given a copy of this form to keep.

☐ I agree / ☐ I do not agree to the interview being recorded.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness' Name: _____ (block letters)

Witness' Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Anyone over the age of 18 may be a witness)

Investigator's Name: Elizabeth Arrabalde

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: 6 October 2014

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human
Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical
aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the
Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any
complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be
informed of the outcome

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

(Co-investigator's copy – Please return to me)

**A Study of Job Satisfaction and Administrative Obligations in Child Care
Centres in NSW**

I, _____ (full name) have read and understand the information above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in a telephone interview, knowing that I can withdraw at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

☐ I agree / ☐ I do not agree to the interview being audio recorded. (Delete whichever is inapplicable)

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness' Name: _____ (block letters)

Witness' Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Anyone over the age of 18 may be a witness)

Investigator's Name: Elizabeth Arrabalde

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome



**Study of Job Satisfaction and Administrative Obligations
in Child Care Centres in NSW**

PREFERENCES FORM (please return)

Name: _____

The best date and time for a telephone interview for me would be:

Option 1: _____

Option 2: _____

Option 3: _____

Please choose whether you would like to take or make the phone call:

☐ I prefer to call you at the mutually convenient time

☐ I prefer for you to call me at the mutually convenient time

on this number: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome

Appendix 7

Key themes in qualitative data

Data from the interviews and survey question 31 were categorised according to the following key themes from the coding process in *NVivo qualitative data analysis software* (QSR International, 2010).

- (a) sources of satisfaction,
- (b) sources of dissatisfaction; or
- (c) both a source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction;
- (d) inconsistent interpretation of regulations;
- (e) pay;
- (f) stress;
- (g) time;
- (h) diversionary nature of paperwork;
- (i) deprioritisation of educator interests; and
- (j) areas of possible change.