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Challenges of the Sandwich Generation: Stress and coping strategy of the multigenerational care

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Abstract. *The Sandwich Generation is defined as those in multigenerational care positions and caregivers for children and parents or in-laws. They are often found in an extended families in Indonesia. Multigenerational parenting carried out by the Sandwich Generation can pose various challenges and problems, especially for Sandwich Generation working females, who must juggle their parenting loads with workplace demands. The Sandwich Generation is at risk for various mental health problems, including stress, depression, and anxiety. The purpose of this study is to describe the stress and coping strategies of the Sandwich Generation. The participants were 12 Sandwich Generation working females a mean age of 36. We applied a phenomenological qualitative approach with Interviews and Focus Group Discussions to collect our data. The result showed that stress occurs mainly in situations when parenting demands arise simultaneously, when both children and parents simultaneously need attention. Stress that appears generally has more impact on the emotional aspects of participants rather than on the physical one, such as feelings of sadness, guilt, and unstable emotions, and in terms of cognitive, forgetfulness, loss of concentration, and overthinking. Coping strategies used by the Sandwich Generation are emotion-focused coping strategies and problem-focused coping strategies. Emotion-focused coping strategies revealed distancing, escape-avoidance, accepting responsibility, self-control, and seeking emotional social support. We found only three problem-focused coping strategies: confrontative coping, seeking informational support, and planful problem-solving.*

Keywords: *sandwich generation; stress; coping strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Badan Pusat Statistik shows that the increase in the elderly population in Indonesia can potentially have social and economic impacts on themselves, their families, and their social environment (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2020). It is further stated that there are not many older adults who have old-age insurance. This becomes reasonably a source of caregiving burden because the elderly will be economically dependent on their children or younger individuals.

The caregivers must face several challenges, one of which is financial stability (Lamarche & Rolison, 2021). This condition makes the productive age population (18 years old and above) have many dependents, namely having to bear themselves, their nuclear families, and their parents,

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eventually making them become part of the Sandwich Generation. The prevalence of Sandwich Generation is increasing every year, especially in developed countries such as Europe and US (Silverstein et al., 2019). Whereas in Asia, especially in China, it is prevalent for a son to have an obligation to take care of his elderly parents while a daughter must take care of her in-laws (Liu, 2021). In Indonesia, 39.10% of married couples live with their parents (The Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Extended family living together or closely together is quite common in Indonesia.

Several studies have demonstrated negative consequences on the physical and psychological health of multigenerational caregivers, particularly for women, who most frequently have the responsibility as primary caregivers. Most research on the effects of nurturing on care providers has focused on caring for older relatives, usually referring to the father or mother, or in-laws (Luna et al., 2021; Manor, 2021). The challenges involved in multigenerational parenting generally impact the Sandwich Generation working women, including personal time, career development, and financial stability. They are also at risk of various mental health problems, including stress, depression, and anxiety, because of increased pressure and demands (Jang et al., 2021; Luna et al., 2021). It becomes more complex when the Sandwich Generation working women have demanding jobs. On the other hand, they are charged with the responsibility of balancing between caring for elderly parents and fulfilling their children's needs. Other research has shown that although the responsibility to care for others can lead to depression and stress, caregivers also benefit from the relationship with those cared for; however, there are likely to be more cases of negative emotional exhaustion if the Sandwich Generation engages in involuntary multigenerational parenting (Jang et al., 2021).

Havilah (2021) found that Sandwich Generation generally feels physically, mentally, and financially exhausted. Physical fatigue includes, among others, feeling tired quickly and aching in several parts of the body, such as the head and back; mental fatigue includes being tense and emotionally disturbed from getting tired after work but still having to take care of the parents and children. The psychological and emotional pressures often increase when conflicting opinions arise between the Sandwich Generation and their parents regarding child-rearing issues (e.g., dealing with children's problematic behavior). Another challenge would be the burdensome financial condition, especially for those whose elders have health issues and need long-term care (Havilah, 2021). On the contrary, other studies have found that responsibility towards parents is not considered a burden for the Sandwich Generation in Indonesia. The results also show that there is shared responsibility between the working Sandwich Generation and the parents, including taking care of children and doing domestic work (Kusumaningrum, 2018).

The relationship between the Sandwich Generation and their parents/ children cannot be separated from the prevailing culture in Indonesia, where generations help and support each other in parenting (Rari et al., 2021). Research from Panggabean et. al. (2014) presented that *guyub* is one of the most substantial cultural standards of Indonesian society. Cultural standard is a distinctive characteristic of a cultural group that builds the general characteristics of that society, formed and developed through the cultivation of norms, values, and habits passed down from generation to generation and carried out by individuals from childhood. The Indonesian cultural standard of *Guyub* is described by Panggabean et. al. (2014) as a comfortable and harmonious group atmosphere whereby all components of social aspects are in harmony (e.g., roles, status) and the group members uphold the value of relationships. *Guyub* is often associated with the term 'kekeluargaan', a family-like group atmosphere with warmth and strong cohesiveness, with conditions of mutual dependence and support. *Guyub*, in this case, can provide comfort for individuals through a sense of acceptance, lack of conflict, and even the fulfillment of social and

emotional support. This is in line with Amalia (2017), who argues that every family member should be able to support each other. This can strengthen family resilience, including physical resilience, such as meeting the needs of clothing, food, and housing; non-physical resilience, such as the fulfillment of the need for security; social resilience, such as maintaining harmonious relationships between family members; and resilience in terms of law and religion such as the basic principles that exist in the family following the applicable legal rules and religious beliefs being held.

Various problems related to the burden of multigenerational care that must be borne by the Sandwich Generation certainly raise different levels of stress and lead to various coping strategies. Individuals may use coping strategies simultaneously or combine one strategy with another (Riley & Bowen, 2005; Williams, 2004). Individuals will be more likely to use emotion focus coping, namely an emotion-oriented coping strategy, when they interpret the problem they face as a condition or situation that cannot be changed; on the contrary, other individuals will be more likely to use problem-focused coping (problem-oriented coping strategies) if they see that the conditions and or situations, they are experiencing are relatively changeable. Furthermore, it can be said that the coping strategies used by someone involved in multigenerational parenting can affect their psychological well-being (Aazami et al., 2018).

Based on the studies, it is commonly recognized that discussions on Sandwich Generation, especially those in Indonesia, are still evolving, with most information being based on quantitative studies. Therefore, we conducted a qualitative phenomenology research to obtain a deep, plentiful, and extensive exploration of the challenging life of the Sandwich Generation. In doing so, this study aims at describing the Sandwich Generation's sources of stress, their stress reactions, and their coping strategies in dealing with and managing problems during their multigenerational parenting. The study results are expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological challenges and coping strategies of the Sandwich Generation and their multigenerational caring roles.

METHOD

The sampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling with the snowball technique. Participants were obtained based on a recommendation from other participants. Initially, 18 potential respondents were approached, and finally, only 12 participants joined the study. The criteria for participating in this study include: 1) working women of 30-55 years old; 2) having children who still need to be cared for; 3) living with or close to parents/in-laws and taking care of them; 4) is feeling stress as measured using the Stress Symptom Checklist (SSC), then confirmed through interviews. The first step in this study was to distribute the SSC as a screening test to potential participants. Then, based on the results of the screening test, the first six people were assigned to be interviewed, then Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with the following six people.

The use of FGD is expected to add to the various perspectives of participants in living the role of the Sandwich Generation. The total participants were 12 working women (six interview participants and one FGD group of six participants). Interviews were conducted face to face, 1-2 times for each participant (60 - 90 minutes per interview). Meanwhile, FGD was conducted online, once with a duration of 90 minutes. Points of exploration included: 1) the meaning of being the Sandwich Generation and the multigenerational care they go through; 2) the sources of stress and its impact on daily life; 3) coping strategies. Informed consent were given beforehand and contained information about the research topic, research objectives, and the rights of participants

regarding the confidentiality of data and the consequences of their participation. Data processing is done by coding from interview transcripts and FGDs; the data were then coded. Coding was grouped based on related themes into categories. The researchers analyzed the categories to derive thematic interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Overview

All participants in this study are working women with a mean age of 36. Some participants live together in the same house with their parents or in-laws, but there are also those who live separately but close to their parents or in-laws, and they meet them daily. The number of parents or in-laws ranged from one to three people aged 66 - 84 years. All participants take care of their parents or in-laws themselves without assistance (e.g., nurse, maid, relatives). The health conditions of the participants' parents or in-laws are generally good; no one has any illnesses requiring special treatment. Two participants had special caregivers who helped taking care of their children while they were working.

Table 1
Overview of Individual Interview Participants

Name	Years	Number of children being cared for	Cared for	Lived together / separately
RA	34	1 child	Parents	Together
RB	32	1 child	Parents	Together
RC	41	2 children	Parents	Separately
RD	42	2 children	In-laws	Separately
RE	40	4 children	Parents	Together
RF	44	3 children	In-laws	Separately

Table 2.
Overview of Focus Group Discussion Participants (FGD)

Name	Years	Number of children being cared for	Cared for	Lived together / separately
FA (RB)	32	1 child	Parents	Together
FB	30	1 child	Parents	Together
FC	35	3 children	Parents	Separately
FD	31	1 child	Parents of In-laws	Together
FE	37	2 children	Parents and In-laws	Together
FF	34	1 child	Parents and In-laws	Together
FG	32	2 children	Parents	Separately

Meanings of Sandwich Generation

The participants view their role as sandwich generation as both positive (e.g., parents can help with household chores such as helping with childcare) and/or negative (e.g., multi-generational care is seen as a financial and emotional burden).

Participants view their role as Sandwich Generation as someone who had obligations as a child to take care of their parents. In this sense, taking care of the elders is considered mandatory;

it is something demanded for a child, which goes without saying. Similar views are conveyed of their parental role for their children. It is a social obligation to take care of their children. However, the latter is not considered burdening and less psychologically demanding. Clearly, the participants perceive their multigenerational care roles disproportionately, with their elderly care role being much more demanding than their parenting role.

"I felt it as an obligation to care for my parent's welfare." (FF)

Three primary reasons are derived from the demanding role of elderly care. First, the participants associate the demands with gender social roles. They share the complex burden of their multiple roles, which is considered socially appropriate even though it is overwhelming and stressful for them, as mentioned by RA.

"In my opinion, the Sandwich Generation is, they have many things that need to be done and resolved, so there are many demands, either from parents, husband, for example, or wife, and taking care of children. So, you get pressure from all kinds of directions. Not to mention later when they work, if she is a woman, there would probably be added burden."

Gender role demands are a substantial part of women Sandwich Generation meanings since many demands that arise from work, and family were undoubtedly a problem for the Sandwich Generation women who worked so that they had the potential to drain their energy and cause fatigue both physically and mentally (Nurendra & Purnamasari, 2017).

Secondly, financial reasons become another critical issue of the demanding role. This is especially true for Sandwich Generation with a modest financial condition that must struggle to meet their nuclear family ends. The additional financial burden to cover their parent expenses or those with long-term health issues is admitted as a heavy burden, as mentioned below,

"The main factor (for me) is financial, making the Sandwich Generation role seem like a financial burden. Because maybe the emotional pressures of not having enough (money), or just barely enough while having to support two generations above, below, and themselves, so it is depressing. Indeed the concern is if someone got sick, it would cost a lot of money." (FC)

The perspective of the demanding financial issues is divided among participants. Rather than perceive financial burden as one of the most critical demands in multigenerational care, other participants point out the conflicting opinions with their parents as more demanding. The third reason for Sandwich Generation's demanding role is that they have different opinions from their parents, particularly when it comes to their parenting style. This creates a sense of discomfort because their parents' conflicting ideas can be viewed as a sense of autonomy disruptions and hinder them from practicing their personal parenting principles.

"I don't really feel burdened when it comes to finance. The pressure is more from other problems. Of course, when you live with your parents, there are differences in basic things like the way you raise a child. So, the burden is more towards that. It is a bit difficult to meet halfway. What can you do? Parents usually already have their mindset... there's a bit of friction there." (RC)

"For example, when my child is sick. I prefer home treatment if I can still handle it myself. Now parents tend to act differently; when a child has a fever, they should go to the doctor immediately. Sometimes I don't feel comfortable. The second example: disciplining children. I tend to communicate a lot. For example, if the child is being disobedient, I would communicate it first and talk it out with my child. However, parents usually go straight to scolding or giving punishment, you know. So, we have differences in these kinds of things." (RE)

Not all participants view the co-living with their parents as a burden. The reality of the Sandwich Generation also has its benefits. Three generations living in one house is considered practical, making it easier to supervise both parents and children. Their needs would also be met

more quickly because they live together and there was frequent interaction between them, as a participant shares it.

"So, from my perspective, it is better because I am... at the same time taking care of the youngest child and my parents as well. So, in other words, I am not nervous. How the two of them are doing, and they are in the same place at the same time, so I feel helped by the situation." (FB)

The above response conveyed a more positive and favorable meanings of the Sandwich Generation, which also reflects *guyub* as the harmonious climate (Panggabean et al., 2014) commonly found in an extended family in Indonesia.

Multigenerational Care Stressors

There are three main stressors in Sandwich Generation multigenerational care: communication problems, intergenerational conflict (e.g., children versus grandparents), and involuntary caregiving.

Communication problems strike out as the most frequent stressors for Sandwich Generation. The reality of multi-generation living together creates a much more complex communication process. The Sandwich Generation should deal with disagreements, frictions, and conflicts between their parent and child and between them and both groups. The participants share a lot of stress-triggering incidents ranging from a simple, daily disagreements (e.g., food choice, sibling quarrel) to more attention-seeking, principal conflicts (e.g., parent-child attention-seeking behavior). Two participants provide stressor examples,

"It is even worse cause when they (the parent-in-laws) want their child's full attention for them. For example, we arranged for a family holiday (my husband and the children), (We) settled all appointments, and bookings, and ordered flight tickets, hotel, and all kinds of things. Then the problem came when my mother-in-law wanted my husband to accompany her (stay with her at her house or take her somewhere) ... Well, this kind of request cannot be denied. We had to follow." (FG)

"(When) the children were fighting, I really could not stand it. They are both girls and when they quarrel, they shout at each other. It is just that there is no escaping the noise. I immediately got a headache. It seems they fight every time for every things, from a small row to a long, intense bicker." (RB)

Furthermore, for Sandwich Generation with grown-up children, conflicts might happen between children and their grandparents, which naturally becomes another stressor for the Sandwich Generation.

"My parent-in-laws want the children to do A, whereas the children want to do B. My parent-in-laws then nag us and even went as far as saying that we could not educate the children to obey them and so on. The kids go to us saying that the grandparents are selfish and should not go around telling people how to run their life; now what do we do?" (RC)

The multigenerational care stressors of Sandwich Generations are in line with studies revealing that the Sandwich Generation's life situations were prone to trigger inter-generational conflicts (Yanuar et al., 2021). Stress is unavoidable for the Sandwich Generation since multigenerational care creates not only a physical burden but also psychological and financial ones (Aazami et al., 2018).

The fact that our Sandwich Generation participants perceive their elderly-care role solely as an obligation plays an integral part in eliciting their stressors. In this sense, the meaning implies that multigenerational care is a duty rather than a voluntary, sincere act. Several studies supported this result, as they pointed out. More cases of negative emotional exhaustion were possible if the Sandwich Generation provided involuntary multigenerational caregiving (Jang et al., 2021).

Sandwich Generation Stress Responses

The stress responses of our participants are indicated by emotional and cognitive ones. The most common stress responses revealed by the participants are emotional ones (e.g., sad, irritated, guilty feelings, not appreciated) combined with less physical and cognitive reactions (e.g., exhausted, distracted). The multiple-level reactions have impacts on their behavioral hurdles to cope with their daily tasks and routine.

Mixed feelings of anger and irritation leading to sadness and guilt indicate emotional stress responses in participants as they share their struggle with childcare while Working from Home (WFH) during the pandemic times.

"Well, sometimes I was working, and my child cried. Obviously, I had to deal with it; I had to calm the child by giving him what he wanted, even though it might not align with my principle. It also means I 'steal' the working hour. I feel wrong... because I distract from my work. On the other hand, if my child is ignored, I feel kind of guilty" (RC).

"I want things done in a certain way, but the children are difficult to follow; they have their wishes, they do various other things instead. It is no problem for me if I am physically fit and fresh. However, if I am already tired from work, for example, and it all becomes a mess, that's when I become irritated and angry." (RE)

Emotional stress responses could also appear in the form of sadness, frustration, and feelings of not being appreciated and supported by the whole family (spouse, children, parents). Very often, the negative emotional responses are triggered by unintentional, trivial behaviors from the family members in daily life that are perceived as stressors by the participants. This is because participants feel that what they are doing is always wrong, unappreciated, and not supported in carrying out their multigenerational care and household chores. In more detail, the emotional reactions were conveyed by participants as follows,

"It is just that sometimes when my workload is plentiful with the deadlines pile up, and at the same time, the condition of the house is not ok with much friction. It is trivial things, for example, parenting my children... or when they (the family) do not like the side dishes I have cooked strenuously, only because it does not suit their appetite. It hurt me when they didn't tell me directly, yet they told everyone. Those kinds of things made me exhausted not only physically but also psychologically. I feel like it is tiring, and... I get emotional." (FA)

"Sometimes we (my husband and I) fight because I do not have anyone to talk to when I am upset. They said it is wrong to talk to this person, it is wrong to talk to that person. It feels like whatever I do becomes more complicated and complex. Moreover, in the meantime, I still have many things to do, this and that, around the house. Can't they understand a bit, and am I wrong if I nag? Everyone else seems ignorant, like when they see the messy kitchen, couldn't they at least help? After all, I am not asking for heavy chores, just maybe a little help by throwing out the garbage, or paying a bit of attention when the children cry. What I am saying is, do not expect me to do everything, I am stressed." (RF)

The pattern of emotional reactions to stress was in line with Manor (2021), who showed that the Sandwich Generation could feel helpless or hopeless when they perceived multigenerational care as a burdening duty with no definite time limit.

Furthermore, cognitive stress responses generally appear in the form of forgetting, distracted/absentminded, and overthinking, as stated by the participants as follows,

"For example, one time I was going out of the house, I was not certain whether I had turned off the stove. I keep thinking about it restlessly, to the point that I must go back to the house, only to find out that I have turned off the stove. Such a waste of time! There was also an instance of

leaving the key on the fence's padlock while I was out of the house. I did not realize it the whole time until I came back home, thankfully, God guarded the house." (RD)

"But once I could not sleep until morning. That happened when I overthink too much." (RB)

The results reflect stress responses experienced by Sandwich Generation as revealed by (Kusumaningrum, 2018) who suggested that it could take the form of complaints such as being physically exhausted due to caregiving and work pressures. Feelings of sadness, a sense of hopelessness, frequently angry, and other negative emotions arose from not being able to provide as much caregiving as they wanted to. The level of stress experienced by the Sandwich Generation could indeed cause various results in their psychological well-being hurdles (Yanuar et al., 2021).

Sandwich Generation Coping Strategies

Based on Lazarus and Folkman's classical concepts of coping strategy, there are generally two types of coping strategies; namely, the problem-focused coping (problem-oriented coping strategy) and the emotion-focused coping (Meurs & Perrewé, 2011; Steiner & Fletcher, 2017). Both types of strategies are found in this study, in which our participants focus more on emotion-oriented coping strategies.

Folkman and Lazarus stated that emotion-oriented coping strategies emphasized individuals who attempted to overcome or manage their emotions (Jang et al., 2021; Lintang et al., 2022; Rari et al., 2021). Participants displayed several emotion-oriented coping strategies: Distancing, Escape-avoidance, Accepting responsibility, Self-control, and Seeking emotional social support.

The act of avoidance from the problematic source but with differential behavioral manifestations characterizes the first two emotional-oriented coping strategies. The first avoidance act is termed Distancing, in which the individual keeps his distance from the source of the problem and acts naturally as if nothing happened based on intentions to avoid conflicts. The second one is Escape-avoidance, whereby the individual avoided and hoped that the stressful situation would disappear over time. In this sense, the individual focuses on forgetting the stressors by avoiding them. While both strategies display avoidance behavior, their underlying drives are different. Distancing focuses on outward to hinder conflict with the stressor, while Escape-avoidance focuses on building inward control.

"Sometimes, for instance... I got too emotional, maybe feeling strongly disappointed. I would leave the room; with my children and husband, we all leave my parent's house... to avoid... pointless debate." (RA)

"I kept my distance, took a step back so that I did not become more upset. Sometimes when we were close to each other, we'd fight. So, it is better to take a deep breath and calm myself until I am relaxing and peaceful again and back to life as usual." (RF)

The third emotional-oriented coping displayed was Accepting Responsibility. It happens when participants ultimately accept and become comfortable with the situation he was experiencing. In this situation, participants intensely focus on spirituality and gratitude. They show thankfulness for having a family, taking responsibility for the family's welfare, and perceive elderly care as a sign of their trustworthiness and as a part of their religious obligations.

"The thing is I am the eldest child of my parents, so I must take the responsibility. In fact, I am the backbone in that house." (RA)

"I'm grateful I still have the chance to care for my mother. Because I'm a Muslim, that is part of our devotion to our parents; that's what I keep in mind. When I am annoyed (with the demands), I would remember that I should not be like that towards my parents. Whenever there are conflicting opinions, I must try to convey themt nicely." (RE)

The act of accepting responsibility, in which participants accept their roles as ones who must carry out multigenerational caregiving, was in line with the findings of Luthfia et. al. (2017), who stated that a respectful attitude towards parents at all costs is highly valued and a common feature in Indonesian society.

The fourth type of emotion-focused coping participants widely used is self-control, which is the effort aimed at regulating one's feelings when dealing with stress. This self-control is very often taking the form of 'Me-time'. Me-Time is when the caregiver takes the time to take care of herself. Me-Time is primarily conducted in participants' leisure time, or they would even deliberately spare time to do Me-Time. The Me-Time includes simple things such as eating instant noodles, watching movies, listening to music, doing hobbies, and other things that the participants felt were helpful to make them calm and free for a moment from the problems of life as the Sandwich Generation.

"The way I handle stress is by saving time for myself with me-time, well, my me-time is also simple, watching k-dramas, eating noodles, but it's true, I always have me-time." (FG)

"I usually take care of my lovingly ornamental plants. When I have time, usually every afternoon or in the morning, I would take a quick look at my plants; at least it calms me down for a moment." (RF)

Seeking emotional social support is the fifth type of emotional coping strategy. It is when participants try to get moral support, sympathy, or understanding from others. This support was generally obtained from their husbands and relatives.

"Luckily, I am grateful to have a husband who is willing to listen to me, so it is a bit lightening the burden with his parents. It becomes more manageable. I would probably just hold the stress in and be patient until my husband has the time at night, then we usually talk." (FE)

"When I gave birth, my aunt helped." (RA)

All forms of support received by the Sandwich Generation in this study were perceived by them as something that could help ease the burden of multigenerational care. The role of social support as a stress-reduction course as the participants mention it is in line with Luna et. al. (2021) who suggested that social support had a buffering effect on the health of care providers by reducing stress.

Furthermore, it is said that the emotional focus of coping carried out by a person is only temporary problem-solving, the root of the problem had not been completed, so it had the potential to cause prolonged stress (Evans et al., 2016; Williams, 2004).

Several types of problem focus coping strategies are found in this study, even though the list is much shorter. Problem-focused coping is a process to manage the distance between demands and the resources they use in dealing with stressful situations (Kostromina et al., 2022). Three types of problem focus coping revealed are confrontative coping, seeking informational support, and rational problem-solving. Participants who did confrontative coping would generally end up in inter-generational conflicts.

"It does escalate to open conflicts if I cannot stand it anymore. So, we fight (me and my husband) each other until it escalates to a verbal argument." (RF)

"I confronted once, it quickly increased the heat, and we became tense, upset all day. What started out as an ordinary discussion then became heated arguments, ended up as open, frontal conflicts, because everyone stood firm on their beliefs." (RD)

"I can still control it when it is with my kid. It is just when it comes to my husband and my mother-in-law, it is difficult for me to keep calm. When they say something (bad), I might raise my tone. It is annoying." (RC)

In seeking informational support, the individual tries to find a solution to the problem by

seeking information from other people or sources they trust.

"If I have a close friend, we can tell each other stories, so I get some input. My cousin is smart, clever, and has many titles, so it is reliable (to have support from) a smart person. So, I got much input on how to deal with my mother and children." (RA)

The third strategy included in problem focus coping was rational problem solving, in which the individual planned the steps for solving the problem and tried to carry out what he had planned intending to eliminate the source of the problem. Participants generally made plans before deciding to discuss the problems they faced with the person who was the source of the problem. In this case, the strategies include being careful with the words, building rapport with small talk or chit chats before finally getting to the point of the real problem, and looking for the perfect moments and the best mood of the parents or children.

"Well, just then, I had to say something. If the problem needs to be discussed, I would be cautious. I would find the right moment when I see their good mood, then I would talk by beating around the bush, not straight to the point." (RB)

"I talked once with mom, if there is a conflict like this, I would try out a solution right." (FC)

"If there is still room for negotiation in the house, I would try negotiating. Mom tries doing this, I will try doing that, with my husband too, sometimes I would ask for help. So, we would divide the tasks, for example, you do that, I will do this part." (RA)

Lazarus and Folkman (Lintang et al., 2022) suggested that the number of individual resources can influence their coping strategies. The resources owned also vary from personality type, physical health condition, economic condition, self-concept, and social support obtained from the surrounding environment.

CONCLUSION

Sandwich Generation working women in this study interpret their multigenerational care as an obligation to take care of their parents or in-laws and their children. This obligation often creates stress and can lead to intergenerational conflict. However, on the other hand, living with or close to parents or in-laws also benefits because parents or in-laws can help supervise their children or help with other household chores. Living with parents or in-laws is often found in family structures in Indonesia, which are full of *guyub* culture. In the context of this *guyub* culture, of course, it can bring a sense of security, comfort, and calmness because groups support each other (Panggabean et al., 2014).

The primary source of stress faced by Sandwich Generation working women is when all demands arise simultaneously. Stress that appears has more impact on the emotional aspects of participants, such as feelings of sadness, guilt, and unstable emotions, and, in terms of cognitive such as forgetfulness, loss of concentration, and overthinking. Stress coping that is widely used is emotion focus coping, on which participants seek social support from those around them to help ease the burden they feel.

Some of the participant's demographic characteristics might have considerable influences on their perception of the meaning of the Sandwich Generation, such as the relatively young age of the participants' children, which would need a more balanced adjustment of from the Sandwich Generation working women. They may feel more negative about parenting because their children are young and need extra attention. So, for further research, it is recommended to be able to examine the Sandwich Generation who have children with teenagers or adults to see the differences. Another demographic characteristic worth to be considered is the fact that our participants are the

sole caregivers. Stress also generally arises because the Sandwich Generation does not have other caregivers dedicated to caring for their children or their parents. It would be interesting to examine the Sandwich Generation with supporting children and/or parent caregivers for further research.

Our research findings have revealed the stressors and stress responses of multigenerational care experienced by working women of the Sandwich Generation. Based on these findings, several implications can be derived, both for the individual Sandwich Generation and their workplaces. The individual implication occurs as the Sandwich Generation female workers are involved in initiatives to balance their work-family burdens to attain improved mental health. Finding social support to assist multigenerational care, such as supporting caregivers, would be a good start. Building stress management skills will have a positive impact on their psychological well-being. No less important than the individual implication is the organizational one. Workplace initiatives in promoting employee welfare are also considered important for maintaining the well-being of the Sandwich Generation working women, for example, in providing flexible working hours and employee counseling.

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