

Needs Analysis on the Module Development for Working Sandwich Generation in public University in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The number of caregivers of older people will increase to 60% by 2040 to maintain the current ratio of caregivers to older people, which in turn will impact on their mental health and career needs. This study provides the profile, characterisation and needs analysis of the samples, which were conducted using non-probability convenience sampling. This included 201 sandwich and non-sandwich generation working at a public university in relation to coping with caring responsibilities, workplace challenges, personal development and interest in specific programmes or support systems to strengthen and improve coping strategies, adaptability and resilience of employees in the workplace. Understanding these dynamics, improved the development of modules and services to better meet the specific needs of these groups. The aim of this study is to identify the need for stress coping strategies, career adaptability and career resilience and to analyse needs-based programmes for the working sandwich generation. The needs analysis shows that the development of modules must be taken into account when designing a career intervention modules. The research proposes a comprehensive intervention module for career guidance programs to aid sandwich generation in coping with stress, enhancing career adaptability and resilience.

1. Introduction

Those who are raising their young children and/or adult children while also taking care of one or both elderly parents are referred to as members of the sandwich generation (Miller, 1981; Nichols & Junk, 1997; Abaya, 2006; Broady, 2019; Turgeman et al, 2020; Noor & Md Isa, 2020). The frequency of this phenomena is rising as more individuals balance employment and caregiving obligations for many generations (Rosenthal et al, 1996; Pierret, 2006; Wiemers and Bianchi, 2015; Ploethner et. al, 2019; Bainbridge et. al, 2023; Farooqui & Alwi, 2023). However, much of the research has found that there are negative impacts on individual members of the sandwich generation, their families, their employers and their job responsibilities (e.g. Brenna, 2021; Evans et. al, 2019; Noor & Isa, 2020; Turgeman-Lupo et. al, 2020; Pashazade, 2023; Jang et. al, 2021; Estioko et.al, 2023). Due to events, working people in the sandwich generation experience a dichotomy between family demands and caring responsibilities (Turgeman et al, 2020), which affects their stress (Sudarji et. al, 2022; Noor & Isa, 2020; Putro, & Riyanto, 2020; Turgeman-Lupo 2020; Lei et. al, 2023), are confronted with conflicts between work and family and have to adapt their careers (Noor & Isa, 2020; Frack & Chapman, 2021; Yucel & Fan 2023). They often use coping strategies such as emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping to manage their tasks.

The situation of the sandwich generation varies from country to country and depends on the type of welfare state and gender. However, many people in the sandwich generation receive limited support, leading to physical, emotional and mental stress as well as financial challenges (Burke 2017; Sudarji, 2022, Kwiatkowska-Ciotucha, 2022). Non-sandwich generation caregivers are caregivers who have an older adult but no dependent children to care for (Lei et.al, 2022). Caring for dependent family members is time-consuming and potentially costly and often leads to a reorganisation of working hours, unpaid leave or even retirement (Bianchi et al. 2006; Wolf and Soldo 1994; Zuba and Schneider 2013). According to Alburez-Gutierrez et al. (2020), empirical evidence indicates that the duration of child care within a dual-earner household can vary between 11.2 and 60 hours per week, with a central tendency towards a weekly average of approximately 20 hours. Moreover, Alburez-Gutierrez et al (2020) posit that the global load is projected to diminish by one-third from 1970 to 2040. However, it

is worth noting that the duration of the sandwich generation may potentially extend by up to one year in specific geographical areas. In addition, the proportion of employees currently working in a sandwich status has increased over the years, with those who expect to live in a sandwich status in the future being less willing to reduce their weekly working hours compared to others (Jooyeoun Suh, 2016). These findings highlight the large time commitment and challenges faced by people in the sandwich generation.

Conversely, it is worth noting that in many instances, sandwich generation care may not entail cohabitation with the elderly parents, but rather encompass a range of assistance provision, including financial aid, emotional support, and the management of everyday responsibilities (Irwati & Gayatri, 2023; Albertini et al., 2022; Rajonhaka et al., 2022). The role of the sandwich generation goes beyond living arrangements and encompasses a complex web of responsibilities and challenges associated with caring for multiple generations simultaneously.

In Malaysia, few studies have been conducted on the sandwich generation and family caregivers through a phenomenological study using a qualitative in-depth interview/telephone interview that could help researchers understand the supporting themes. Working professionals in the sandwich generation may face psychological issues such as stress, low morale (Noor & Isa, 2020), self-care and relationship (Anuar et al., 2019), emotional well-being, physical health (Sidek et al., 2022), and strain (Idura et al., 2018). In addition, career adaptability and career resilience address issues such as work life interruption and financial strain (Noor & Isa, 2020; Anuar et al., 2019; Bakar et al., 2014), social and professional life (Sidek et al., 2022), level of spirituality (Idura et al. 2018), education, psychosocial and family support, and professional counselling services (Bakar et al., 2014).

Another important aspect is that working caregivers of the sandwich generation in Malaysia face significant challenges as they have to juggle career and caring responsibilities (Norzareen, 2010; Fatah et al, 2022; Ahmad Zubaidi et al, 2020; Razi et al, 2023; Chan et al, 2022; Idura et al, 2018; Jawahir et al, 2021; Kong et al, 2021; Sidek et al, 2022). Working women of the sandwich generation also reported challenges to their professional adaptability (Alavi, et al. 2015; Ozdemir, & Koç, 2023) and their professional resilience (Windle, 2011; Lengelle, et al. 2017; Al Arkoubi & Wollack-Spiller, 2023).

With regard to the study conducted in Malaysia by Kassim et.al. (2018), which analysed seven papers from 2008-2017, reported that stress prevalence among the working population in Malaysia ranged from 6.0% to 71.7%, with a mean stress prevalence of 29.9%. Manaf et al (2021) reported in a study among Malaysian public university staff that out of a total of 459 participants, 55.6% of the participants had symptoms of at least one mental illness, of which 28.7% had symptoms of depression, 50.1% had symptoms of anxiety and 14.8% had symptoms of stress. Although the percentage of employees with symptoms of stress was lower than those with symptoms of depression and anxiety, according to Varghese et. al (2023), untreated stress can lead to mental illness, and stress can affect physical, emotional and financial problems (Segal, et al., 2018). Statti et. al (2021) agreed in their study of university employees that caring responsibilities and work engagement have an impact on employee stress and that interventions can alleviate caregiver stress (Gitlin et al., 2015).

Although there is limited direct evidence on the combination of stress and career needs, such as career adaptability and career resilience interventions for caregiver and the working sandwich generation as support workers specifically in Malaysia, the researcher refers to the findings of Zahed et. al, (2020) in relation to stress, the study by Ozdemir & Koç, (2023) and Del-Corso, J. J. (2017) in relation to career adaptability and the study by AlArkoubi & Wollack-Spiller, (2023), Yi-Frazier et. al, (2017), Ghezelsefloo, (2019) and Shin & Choi, (2020) in relation to career resilience, but the studies do not directly address the combination of stress and career needs, such as career adaptability and career resilience intervention. Both concepts (career adaptability and career resilience) have emerged in response to the fact that people face transitions, challenges and stressful situations and events in their careers. Adaptability refers more to an individual's readiness to cope with such situations, i.e. effective prevention, and resilience refers to the individual's good functioning despite the stressful and

challenging situations, i.e. effective response (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). Nevertheless, there is a strong positive correlation between the two and it appears that adaptability leads to resilience (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et. al., 2015; Rivera et. al., 2021)

Needs assessment plays a decisive role in the development of modules for employee career counselling. It helps to justify costs, document effectiveness and make informed decisions about the services offered by career counsellors (Krumboltz & Vidalakis, 2000). Career assessments, including 360-degree assessments, are recognised as valuable tools for learning and development, identifying problems, highlighting alternatives and suggesting actions for both employees and employers (Verlander (1986). Management development programmes focus on training managers to manage the link between a stable workforce, cost control and corporate strategy, with an emphasis on career development to provide job security and align individual career needs with corporate profitability goals (Hammond 2001). Incorporating needs assessment into the design of the modules ensures alignment with the final assessment processes and improves the overall impact on career adaptability and resilience.

Profiling and needs assessment are an important aspect of understanding the different care needs of different population groups. Several existing studies have looked at similar research. Studies have shown that understanding the needs of caregivers is crucial for developing tailored career intervention modules. For instance, Sung and Chan (2022) found that older adults with cognitive impairment have different profiles of met and unmet care needs, with unmet social and memory needs causing higher burden. Yanagisawa et al (2022) developed a needs assessment framework for caregivers of children with disabilities in Thailand.

Furthermore, the process of examining profile data pertaining to caregiver entails the identification of distinct subgroups of caregiver, which are determined by their unique traits and the specific situations in which they provide care. An investigation conducted by Yan et al. (2023) revealed the existence of three distinct caregiver profiles, namely non-vulnerable caregivers, isolated vulnerable caregivers, and traumatised vulnerable caregivers. According to a study conducted by Yan et al. (2023), caregivers who experienced isolation and trauma reported elevated levels of caregiver stress, diminished social support and resilience, and more severe childhood traumatic experiences. Additionally, Colombo et al. (2023) observed that female caregivers exhibited a greater tendency to experience high burden and low benefit in comparison to their male counterparts. In a study conducted by Drummond et al. (2022), an examination of caregivers assessments revealed that female caregivers exhibited a higher likelihood of being of working age, unemployed, and experiencing mental health issues. Conversely, male caregivers were more inclined to be retired and reported lower levels of mental wellbeing. Bramble et al (2020) conducted a profile analysis and identified different profiles for caring for older people based on the time spent caring, the life situation of the care recipient and the impairment of the care recipient.

To date, global research on caregiver profiling and the sandwich generation has been reviewed. Justin et. al, (2022) examined a national profile of families and caregivers of children with disabilities, Lei, (2022) reported on a national profile of the sandwich generation in the United States. Other research looks at the profile of kinship care (Plick, et al. 2021), the profile of end-of-life caregiving in the United States (Ornstein, 2017), a national profile of intergenerational, jointly delivered programmes (Jarrott & Lee, 2022), a national profile of family members and unpaid caregivers assisting older adults with health care (Wolff et. al, 2016), and a national profile of older caregivers (Takagi et. al, 2013). In Malaysia, Jawahir et al (2021) investigated the impact of care intensity on informal caregivers. The study included 11,160 participants, representing an estimated 21.3 million adults. 5.1% of the participants were caregivers of older adults.

The present study provides the profile and characterisation of sandwich and non-sandwich generation employees in one of the public universities in Malaysia in terms of coping strategies, career adaptability and career resilience as a baseline finding to understand the socio-demographic profile and compare the individual, career and caregiving needs of sandwich and non-sandwich generation employees. Due to the numerous challenges faced by the working sandwich generation, it is important that baseline

research is conducted at the university level to profile the career needs of the sandwich and non-sandwich generation. These studies also highlight the importance of understanding the profiles of caregivers in a descriptive analysis in order to tailor interventions and support for caregivers. The present investigation employs various descriptive assessment methodologies to elucidate the findings of the requirements assessment. In summary, the findings underscore the significance of conducting needs assessments in order to create customised and efficient career intervention modules for working sandwich generations.

2. Methodology

Research design

Cross-sectional studies, despite their inherent limitations in demonstrating causality, are of paramount importance in conducting need assessments across many sectors. Through the evaluation of exposure and consequence simultaneously, these studies provide significant contributions to our understanding of the frequency of phenomena, attitudes, and knowledge among certain populations. This knowledge is crucial for recognising present need and devising future career intervention modules. Conducting a requirements assessment is crucial for gathering pertinent information regarding the prospective content of the module under development. Conducting a needs analysis is crucial for acquiring pertinent information regarding the content of the module that is to be built. The needs analysis, as posited by Linfield and Posavac (2018), serves as an initial tool for identifying the necessity of implementing new programs within an organisation. Potential approaches for conducting a needs assessment encompass several methodologies such as focus groups, personal interviews, examination of administrative data, analysis of archive data, or administration of surveys (Burkholder et al., 2019). The needs analysis comprises observations that evaluate the requirements of both the sandwich generation and non-sandwich generations in order to facilitate the development of the module. A comparative study is undertaken to ascertain the disparities between the present circumstances and the envisioned state, and to ascertain whether this disparity should be mitigated in relation to stress management and coping mechanisms, career adaptability, and career resilience. The intervention refers to the process of teaching and learning using the module that incorporates the career intervention modules approach. This study was conducted in one of the public universities in Malaysia. The data collection targeted the non-academic staff of the university who are in the role of sandwich and non-sandwich generation. The questionnaire was distributed to all non-academic staff via email. Only sandwich generation and non-sandwich generation respondents were able to answer the questions.

Research Sample

The sample is selected from the population using non-probability convenience sampling. These are subjective methods of selecting samples based on factors such as the purpose of the study, which means that not every member of the population has a known or equal chance of being included in the sample (Wu & Thompson, 2020; Vehovar et al, 2016). The research sample comprises 201 non-academic staff at one of the public universities in Malaysia. Table 1 shows the background information of all participants (sandwich and non-sandwich generation).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of sandwich and non-sandwich generation.

	Sandwich generation (N=155)		Non-sandwich generation (N=46)		Total (N=201)	
Variables	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender						
Female	88	56.77	33	71.74	121	60.20

Male	67	43.23	13	28.26	80	39.80
Age						
18 - 25	0	0.00	4	8.70	4	1.99
26 - 30	9	5.81	6	13.04	15	7.46
31 - 35	24	15.48	11	23.91	35	17.41
36 - 40	42	27.10	11	23.91	53	26.37
41 - 45	36	23.23	6	13.04	42	20.90
46 - 50	19	12.26	4	8.70	23	11.44
51 - 55	16	10.32	4	8.70	20	9.95
56 - 60	9	5.81	0	0.00	9	4.48
Religion						
Islam	155	100	43	93.48	198	98.50
Hindu	0	0	1	2.17	1	0.50
Buddha	0	0	1	2.17	1	0.50
Christian	0	0	1	2.17	1	0.50
Position						
Administrative and Professional	27	17.42	9	19.57	36	17.91
Support Staff	128	82.58	37	80.43	165	82.09
Status		0.00		0.00	0	0.00
Married	147	94.84	13	28.26	160	79.60
Single Parent	8	5.16	2	4.35	10	4.98
Single	0	0.00	31	67.39	31	15.42
No. of Children						
No Children	0	0	46	100	46	22.89
1	32	20.65	0	0	32	15.92
2	32	20.65	0	0	32	15.92
3	41	26.45	0	0	41	20.40

4	30	19.35	0	0	30	14.93
5	9	5.81	0	0	9	4.48
6	2	1.29	0	0	2	1.00
7	1	0.65	0	0	1	0.50
8	1	0.65	0	0	1	0.50
Staying With						
Parents	16	10.32	11	23.91	27	13.43
Mother Only	35	22.58	14	30.44	49	24.38
Father Only	1	0.65	2	4.35	3	1.49
Parents in Law	5	3.23	0	0.00	5	2.49
Mother in Law Only	14	9.03	0	0.00	14	6.97
Father in Law Only	3	1.94	0	0.00	3	1.49
Not Staying With Any	81	52.26	19	41.30	100	49.75

Table 1 illustrates the number of sandwich and non-sandwich generation caregivers who participated in this study and provides a comprehensive data set to compare variables between the sandwich generation (those caring for their ageing parents while supporting their own children) and the non-sandwich generation (those caring for their ageing parents without children) within a given population. The total number of participants is 201, of which 155 belong to the sandwich generation and 46 to the non-sandwich generation. In terms of gender distribution, there are more women (60.20%) than men (39.80%) in the entire sample, with a higher proportion of women in the non-sandwich generation (71.74%) than in the sandwich generation (56.77%). The majority of participants are between 31 and 40 years old, although the 41-45 age group is also strongly represented. The 18-25 age group is only represented in the non-sandwich generation. The vast majority of participants are of Islamic faith (98.50%), while Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are only marginally represented. In addition, there is a significant difference in marital status between the two groups, with a high percentage of married individuals in the sandwich generation (94.84%) compared to the non-sandwich generation (28.26%). The non-sandwich generation has a significant proportion of single people (67.39%).

However, the age distribution and marital status indicate that belonging to the sandwich generation is closely related to being married and belonging to a certain age group, probably because these factors coincide with life stages in which both dependent children and ageing parents are present. All participants in the sandwich generation have children, ranging from 1 to 8 children. The participants who do not belong to the sandwich generation have no children, indicating the clear distinction used for categorisation in this study. A significant proportion of the sandwich generation therefore live with extended family (parents, parents-in-law or just the mother), which is less common in the non-sandwich generation. This could be due to caring responsibilities towards the older generation in their cohabiting households.

The data highlights the prevalence of caring responsibilities in the sandwich generation and emphasises the potential pressures and challenges they face in balancing these responsibilities with their own life needs. The high proportion of Islamic faith among the participants indicates a cultural or regional

context that may influence family structures, norms for caring and lifestyle choices. In addition, gender-specific differences can be derived in relation to the roles and responsibilities of caregivers. This applies in particular to the higher proportion of women in both groups, but especially in the non-sandwich generation, which may reflect social norms in relation to caring.

Research Procedures and Measures

In order to obtain permission to conduct the needs assessment, conduct surveys and collect data on participation in all areas investigated in this study, written permission was obtained from the human resources department to conduct the study among the support staff of the prestigious university. The researcher collected the data among the non-academic staff of the university by collecting email and Google form data for demographic purposes and the needs assessment questionnaire. The researcher then created a Google form to collect the profile data and survey the university employees via email. The profile data consisted of demographic questions, including the sandwich and non-sandwich generation profile and needs assessment.

The needs assessment comprised a set of ten questions that required binary responses. The participants provided responses to enquiries regarding program requirements, familiarity with coping mechanisms, sharing personal experiences with those facing similar circumstances, access to professional counselling services, understanding of personal values, work strategies, adaptability in the workplace, resilience in the workplace, and spiritual knowledge. The data pertaining to the opinions of non-academic personnel about needs assessment was subjected to analysis using percentages, as it employed a rating scale consisting of binary yes/no responses. The inclusion of yes/no items in needs assessment questionnaires has numerous benefits. Firstly, they offer valuable data for the purposes of course design and informed decision-making by instructors (Watkins et. al., 1994). Furthermore, its ability to provide prompt feedback enables educators to make necessary adjustments to their instructional methods during critical moments (Ghoshal, 2020). Furthermore, the utilisation of yes/no questions can serve as a valuable tool in determining the key variables that should be taken into account during the building of a proficient professional development program tailored to the intended audience (Robinson et al., 1998). Ultimately, these tools can be employed to evaluate the requirements of adult populations, thereby offering significant insights for addressing those requirements (Sloane et al., 2014; Souza, 2014).

In light of the incorporation of needs- and resource-related elements within the inventory, it was anticipated in this research that the items would primarily address the requirements of module development. Upon conducting an analysis of the requirements assessment, it was anticipated that the assessment would pertain to the construction of modules with the aim of mitigating stress levels and enhancing career adaptability and resilience. The present study investigated variations in needs assessment across different demographic cohorts, specifically focussing on the working sandwich and non-sandwich generation of caregivers, as well as the sandwich and non-sandwich generation residing with older individuals (including parents, parents-in-law, mother, father, mother-in-law, and father-in-law).

The analysis of this item and the data was conducted using the SPSS software. The use of SPSS in the field of social sciences for the purpose of recording dichotomous and polynomial responses is emphasised by its user-friendly characteristics, which enable a diverse array of statistical methodologies. The comprehensibility of SPSS for users, as emphasised in the thorough guide, renders it an indispensable instrument for data analysis, encompassing tasks such as frequency distributions, charts, mean comparisons, and more intricate methodologies like regression, correlation, and factor analysis. This evolutionary process has facilitated the democratisation of data analysis, hence increasing the accessibility of advanced statistical techniques to a wider spectrum of academics and practitioners within the field of social sciences. In conclusion, the user-friendly interface of SPSS, coupled with its effective handling of both dichotomous and polynomial responses, positions it as a favoured option in the realm of social scientific research. The software's extensive range of capabilities

facilitates a broad spectrum of statistical examinations, encompassing both fundamental operations and sophisticated modelling strategies, hence accommodating the varied requirements of social science research approaches (Peeters et al., 2010).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is a fundamental metric used in the evaluation of reliability for measurement scales in the field of social sciences. It serves as an indicator of internal consistency and the degree of random measurement error in scales consisting of multiple items (Bonett & Wright, 2015). The findings of the study suggest that the needs assessment tool has a reliability coefficient of 0.811. This indicates that the instrument's components can measure the concept of knowledge and that the psychometric criteria for creating a tool to assess coping strategies, career adaptability, and career resilience were fulfilled. The literature also emphasizes the importance of considering sample size, scale length, item intercorrelations, and scale dimensionality, as these factors significantly influence the reliability estimate and its precision.

Findings and discussions.

Table 2: Univariate descriptive analysis and Item analysis overall

No	Item	Sandwich generation (N=155)				Non-sandwich generation (N=46)				Total (N=201)			
		Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%	Yes	%	No	%
1	I need a support/psychoeducation programme to help me deal with the pressures of balancing my career, family and caring for parents/parents-in-law.	58	37.42	97	62.58	12	26.09	34	73.91	70	34.83	131	65.17
2	I need knowledge/technique to cope with stress while caring for my parents/parents-in-law who live with me.	73	47.10	82	52.90	14	30.43	32	69.57	87	43.28	114	56.72
3	I need a sharing sessions with someone who is or has been dealing with a work situation and caring for parents/parents-in-law.	67	43.23	88	56.77	16	34.78	30	65.22	83	41.29	118	58.71
4	I need guidance sessions from counsellors to help me in working situations and care for parents/parents-in-law.	43	27.74	112	72.26	9	19.57	37	80.43	52	25.87	149	74.13
5	I am looking for opportunities to be a good person towards parents/parents-in-law and other family members.	138	89.03	17	10.97	35	76.09	11	23.91	173	86.07	28	13.93
6	I need a strategy for me to work and take care of my family and parents/parents-in-laws effectively.	97	62.58	58	37.42	29	63.04	17	36.96	126	62.69	75	37.31
7	I wanted to know how the technique of being a non-problematic employee even though I need to take care of my family and parents/parents-in-law.	93	60.00	62	40.00	26	56.52	20	43.48	119	59.20	82	40.80
8	I want to be a resilience worker at work even though I need to take care of my family and parents/parents-in-law.	122	78.71	33	21.29	37	80.43	9	19.57	159	79.10	42	20.90
9	I need information on the importance of spirituality in improving quality as a caregiver towards parent/parent-in-law and children well.	115	74.19	40	25.81	33	71.74	13	28.26	148	73.63	53	26.37

10	I have never attended any program related to the technique of caring for parents/parents-in-law.	138	89.03	17	10.97	39	84.78	7	15.22	177	88.06	24	11.94
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The insights gained from analysing the data show the necessary needs that should be considered when developing the module. There were demographic differences in the needs of caregivers as measured in the needs analysis (Table 2). Differences were found in all measures of need, with caregivers (sandwich and non-sandwich generation) indicating a specific level of need for certain items. For questions 1-4, i.e. programme needs, knowledge of coping strategies, sharing experiences with people in the same situation, professional counselling services, 35.1%, 43.8%, 41.2% and 25.8% of respondents indicated a need of less than 50.

However, more than 50% of the participants indicated that they need knowledge to be a good person, work strategies, adaptability at work, resilience at work, spiritual knowledge, approximately 86.6%, 62.9%, 59.3%, 78.9% and 73.2% respectively. A total of 88.1% of participants indicated that they had never participated in a parenting/in-law care technique programme. Despite this, sandwich and non-sandwich generation participants living with older people (parents/parents-in-law/mother/father/mother-in-law/father-in-law) gave slightly higher scores on all items than the sandwich and non-sandwich generation in general.

A significant proportion of the sandwich generation (37.42%) and a smaller proportion of the non-sandwich generation (26.09%) believe that they need support or psychoeducation programmes to manage their work, family and caring responsibilities. This result shows that the sandwich generation has a greater need for psychoeducational and support programmes than the non-sandwich generation. The sandwich generation, which consists of people who are responsible for both elderly parents and children, requires special psychoeducational and support programmes due to the particular challenges they face. These individuals are faced with physical and mental demands, excessive responsibilities and obstacles that hinder self-realisation (Nawantara, 2023). In contrast, the non-sandwich generations do not face these particular challenges.

There exist several parallels between psychoeducational and support programs, such as the requirement for knowledge or strategies to effectively manage stress among individuals belonging to both the sandwich and non-sandwich generations. A significant proportion of individuals belonging to the sandwich generation (47.10%) and the non-sandwich generation (30.43%) express a desire to acquire knowledge or strategies for managing stress, specifically in the context of attending to the needs of cohabiting parents or in-laws. The aforementioned findings suggest that individuals belonging to the sandwich generation experience a notable level of stress, with this demand being particularly evident among this demographic (Fenstermacher et al., 2022; Sarif, 2022). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that both cohorts have a proclivity for engaging in social interactions with those facing comparable circumstances, so highlighting a requirement for communal assistance and the exchange of personal reflections (Timmers & Gielens, 2022; Williams, 2004). Engaging in the exchange of experiences and receiving assistance from the community helps alleviate the challenges faced by the sandwich generation and enhance their capacity for empathy.

A lower but significant number of both groups seek professional help with work difficulties during caregiving. This population faces stress, burnout, and mental health concerns (Sudarji et al. 2022; Fenstermacher et al., 2022), requiring coping techniques. Work-life balance issues can also overwhelm and tire caregivers (Jurist-Rosner et al, 2022). Professional counselling can help with job and caregiving. Emotion- and problem-focused coping strategies can help sandwich generation caregivers balance their two roles (Tugeman-Lupo et al., 2019).

A majority of both groups try to be good to their families, with the sandwich generation being slightly more inclined. Malaysian culture values family duties and connections, according to Alavi et al. (2015). Family duties and relationships in India alter marriage dynamics and indicate gender inequalities in childcare and parenting practises, which affects marital relationships (Sarif, 2022). Adult sons in Hong

Kong display a high feeling of responsibility by providing financial and emotional support for elderly parents (Kwok, 2006). Confucian piety emphasises adult children caring for their ageing parents, emphasising family obligation (Lam, 2006). Intergenerational care and relationships are valued in Europe, where adult children assist their parents over competitors (Albertini et al, 2022). The statistics indicate that sandwich generation family obligations and relationships are valued across cultures. Since intergenerational caring responsibilities are likely to rise, policy and clinical support are crucial to this population's vital caring duties (DeRigne & Ferrante, 2012).

Both generations want ways to balance work and caring, but the sandwich generation needs them more. Understanding, support, and resources are needed to help sandwich generation members balance family duties across generations (Burke 2017). The sandwich generation—people who care for their elderly parents and young children while working—needs work-family balance measures. Research demonstrates that this balance is challenging and that people manage their duties in different ways. These strategies include living with integrity, being your best, and maintaining social relationships, as well as maintaining health and well-being, managing time and energy, and letting go of responsibility (Evans et al., 2016). Integrating work and life is stressed over seeing them separately. Synergies across different elements of one's life may reduce the strain to maintain a strict balance.

Sandwich generations are common, with many working while juggling generational family duties, according to Daatland et al. (2010). Jurist-Rosner et al. (2022) found that women face additional challenges when starting a business while juggling family and societal expectations, as well as a lack of female role models in business. Work-life balance requires prioritising values, setting realistic goals, and allowing for flexibility and self-care (Alleyne, 2016; Friedman & Westring, 2015; Chittenden & Ritchie 2011). These solutions highlight acknowledging and conquering the sandwich generation's unique obstacles in achieving a balanced and meaningful life. Working professionals also discover that integrating work and life rather than viewing them as competing needs might improve balance. Through psychoeducational and support programs, the sandwich generation can balance job and family care using health maintenance, time management, cognitive refocusing, and social support (Alshemmeri et al., 2011).

Despite their caregiving obligations, most in both categories want to stay professionally resilient and competent. Sandwich generation have higher levels of work-family conflict, particularly family time interference with work, than those caring for only one generation (Abramowska-Kmon, 2017). The 21st century workplace is marked by rapid technological advances, high employee turnover, and changing expectations of workers, particularly Generation Z. Career resilience has never been more important. The sandwich generation needs career resilience to manage their diverse tasks without sacrificing their professional advancement or well-being (Borg et al., 2020). People management programmes that foster resilience help organisations assist the sandwich generation. This includes psychoeducational programs for this population's personnel. Professional support programs like workshops can help caregivers combine work and family while caring for an elderly parent (Smith, 1989). Individual and organisational resilience requires emotional intelligence, problem-solving, adaptation, and social support (Grant & Kinman, 2012; McEwen, 2011). The sandwich generation needs these qualities to thrive under the strains of care obligations and employment, to secure their welfare, and to contribute effectively to their workplace.

Thus, most members of both groups believe spirituality improves family connections and can be used as a coping mechanism. The relationships do not directly address the significance of spirituality in improving the sandwich generation's quality of life, but they do reveal the complexity of their experiences, which may indirectly influence the importance of spirituality or comparable coping techniques. The sandwich generation's well-being is influenced by relationships and interactions with their children and their ageing parents, which are more strongly linked to marital relationships than caring itself (Ward & Spitze, 1998). This shows that their emotional and relational lives are vital to their happiness and well-being. While distinct, spirituality and religiosity help sandwich generation members manage their duties and find meaning. Spirituality, especially, is linked to generativity's self-

expanding features, suggesting that persons at this stage may discover more purpose and fulfilment through spiritual practises (Eggers & Hensley, 2013). Spirituality, which promotes purpose, connectedness, and resilience, may also help. The demographics and limited supports accessible to children of elderly persons underscore their role's stress and the necessity for emotional and practical coping techniques. Spirituality or comparable practises could provide emotional support, coping methods, and a sense of community to the sandwich generation as they age, manage marital and personal relationships, and manage financial restrictions. These factors are essential for managing stress, mental health, and quality of life in the complicated dynamics of intergenerational caregiving (Bakir-Demir et al., 2020). Although spirituality is not directly mentioned, the underlying issues of stress, relationship quality, and the need for coping skills suggest that spirituality may help the sandwich generation. Further research on spirituality in this demographic may reveal the benefits of psychoeducational and support programs.

However, most responders from both groups had never attended a grooming programme, indicating a lack of resources or awareness. The sandwich generation prioritises close family and work over support programmes in their pursuit for an acceptable identity and professional and family duties (Grundy & Henretta, 2006). According to empirical data, family solidarity is important in caregiving, but adult children and elderly parents often compete for time and resources, making it hard for the sandwich generation to participate in programmes (Akgun-Citak et al., 2020; Raiber et al., 2024). Modern families, particularly the sandwich generation, need programs and career intervention modules to meet their caregiving and work-life balancing needs. In conclusion, the sandwich generation's participation in numerous programmes, workshops, and research initiatives shows that they are actively seeking support and resources to manage their dual caregiving tasks.

However, much of the research has shown that they need tailored programs to assist work-life balance and care obligations. Employers and line managers can help the working sandwich generation by exhibiting family-supportive attitudes, which improves health, wellbeing, and organisational outcomes. Supervisors can support sandwich generation employees by learning family-supportive supervisor conduct (Timmers & Gielens, 2022). The sandwich generation in the US demonstrates the need for national measures to help them get the resources they need to care for others without jeopardising their health (Lei et al., 2022; Sarif, 2022). Sandwich generation couples in India struggle financially and emotionally, affecting their marriages and emphasising the need for comprehensive research and support systems to ensure their socio-economic well-being (Fenstermacher et al., 2022). European study also underlines sandwich generation women's double load and advises employers, career counsellors, and policymakers to support them at work (Rajahonka et al., 2022). The sandwich generation needs lifelong learning for personal growth and job success, which improves work-life balance and well-being (Rajahonka & Villman 2022). Financial, emotional, and time concerns plague the sandwich generation in Malaysia, who want a systematic support plan (Noor & Isa, 2020). Finally, the sandwich generation's stress and coping techniques in Indonesia require both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping mechanisms, stressing the need for personalised assistance programmes (Sudarji et al., 2022).

Suggestion for future research

Career intervention modules for the sandwich generation, who care for elderly parents and support their own children, must address stress, coping methods, career adaptability, and resilience. Stress from parenting and caring typically plagues the sandwich generation. This can cause depression, guilt, and instability. This demographic also uses a variety of coping tactics, from emotional social support to planned issue solving.

Recognising the unpredictability of today's work climate and the need for workers to adjust to stay employed, career intervention modules should improve career adaptability for the sandwich generation. Career planning and skills development require career flexibility, including apprehension, control,

curiosity, and confidence. Psychological needs, notably coping and adaptive abilities, also help the sandwich generation adjust to adversities. There is evidence that psychological talents deteriorate over time, emphasising the necessity to strengthen them. The sandwich generation's subjective well-being should be considered and programmes should reduce stress and increase life satisfaction through appropriate coping mechanisms.

The resilience and coping intervention helps participants develop coping methods and socialise with individuals facing similar circumstances, making it a promising model. Parental attitudes affect career adaptability and resilience, thus they should be examined. Caring parents boost career resilience and aspiration, improving career adaptability. Finally, the sandwich generation needs protective measures and adaptive coping skills for weak older individuals. This holistic approach to career intervention modules can assist the sandwich generation manage stress, increase career adaptability and resilience, and handle the complexities of their caring role.

3. Conclusion and future scope

This dataset provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges encountered by individuals belonging to the sandwich generation. They require assistance in multiple domains, including stress management, achieving a healthy work-life balance, fostering personal development, and promoting mental vitality. The primary focus revolves around the necessity of abundant resources and robust support structures to effectively navigate the complexities associated with juggling caregiving obligations alongside personal and occupational commitments. This statement underscores the importance of implementing targeted interventions and educational programs aimed at providing assistance to those belonging to the sandwich generation and those encountering comparable challenges.

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