

Job Hugging Phenomenon's for Sandwich Generation and Its Strategic Coping

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the phenomenon of job hugging among sandwich generation individuals from the Millennial Generation and Generation Z, as well as the coping strategies used in dealing with dual-role pressures. The study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design through in-depth interviews with five respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of experiences and respondents' adaptive strategies. The findings indicate that job hugging is perceived as an adaptive strategy to maintain economic stability amid family responsibilities and job insecurity, through the utilization of a combination of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, and no significant differences were found between the Millennial Generation and Generation Z. These findings highlight the importance of a work environment that is responsive to the needs of employees with family responsibilities in order to sustain work roles and psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The world of work in Indonesia is undergoing significant changes as millennials and Generation Z dominate the workforce. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) indicates that by February 2025, approximately 62.8% of the workforce will be comprised of millennials and Generation Z, with contributions of 38.9% and 23.9%, respectively (BPS Indonesia, 2025). The dominance of this productive age group demonstrates the potential of a workforce that is adaptable to technology, flexible, and has a progressive career orientation. However, on the other hand, unstable economic conditions also influence the career decision-making dynamics of the younger generation.

Indonesia still faces various economic challenges, such as declining purchasing power, economic decline, relatively high poverty rates, and dependence on food imports (Waras & Juwita, 2024). This situation has created a heated labor market that has impacted individual career behavior, one of which is the emergence of the phenomenon of job hugging. Job hugging refers to the tendency of employees to stay in their current jobs and be reluctant to change jobs even when better opportunities are available, as a way to avoid the risks that threaten the economy (UVERS, 2025). The main reason driving this is the need for economic stability and financial security guarantees (Agustine, 2025). Besides socially, people want to be treated with respect in public and in an increasingly open society as a result of the necessities of life, globalization and internal needs (Suratman et al., 2019).

The phenomenon of job hugging is also known as being locked at the job, which is a condition where an individual feels dissatisfied with their job but faces limited opportunities or courage to leave the job (Feenstra-Verschure et al., 2023; Zhao, 2024). The Glassdoor Worklife Trends 2025 report shows that the slowing job market and the ongoing recruitment process are causing many workers to feel trapped in their careers and choose to stay for the sake of income stability (Zhao, 2024). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is starting to be found more and more, especially among the millennial and generation Z generations, who tend to maintain their jobs due to concerns about the difficulty of getting a new job and the increasing cost of living (Risdawati, 2025). They stay in their jobs because of limited opportunities or are reluctant to take risks due to fear of failure (Winzer, 2025).

In addition to job market factors, the sandwich generation phenomenon also plays a role in strengthening individuals' tendency to stay in their jobs. The sandwich generation refers to individuals who are in a position of financial responsibility for elderly parents as well as children or other family members who are still economically dependent (Miller, 1981). Carol Abaya (dalam Abramson, 2015) The sandwich generation is divided into two categories: club sandwich and open-faced sandwich. While this concept was initially associated with middle-aged individuals, social and economic developments indicate that millennials and Generation Z are increasingly experiencing similar conditions (Burke & Calvano, 2017).

A national survey conducted by Tirto in collaboration with Jakpat on 1,500 respondents in 33 provinces in Indonesia showed that more than 50% of

respondents admitted to being in the sandwich generation, with the majority coming from the young productive age group (Tirto, 2023). Neal & Hammer (2017) It was found that individuals in the sandwich generation tend to stay in their jobs not for personal satisfaction or interest, but rather to ensure income stability to meet family needs.

The burden of high financial responsibility encourages individuals to prioritize job security over long-term development.

These findings suggest a link between the role of the sandwich generation and the job-hugging phenomenon. The significant financial responsibility makes individuals prefer to maintain their jobs even if they don't offer job satisfaction or opportunities for personal development (Sidik & Purwanto, 2025). However, empirical studies specifically addressing the sandwich job phenomenon among millennials and Generation Z in Indonesia are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the sandwich job phenomenon faced by millennials and Generation Z, as well as examine potential anticipatory measures to address this situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Hugging

Job Hugging refers to the tendency of employees to stay in their current jobs and avoid career mobility even when better opportunities exist, primarily due to considerations of stability and economic risk (Rush, 2025). This phenomenon is closely related to the concept of being locked into a job, which is a condition where an individual feels dissatisfied with their job but views the opportunity to leave as limited (Feenstra-Verschure et al., 2023). Stengård et al. (2017) There is a reciprocal relationship between feelings of helplessness and being trapped at work. In positive way, engagement positively impacts performance and social life in the workplace (Faradiva & Suratman, 2024). However, if it is seen as feeling trapped or Individuals who feel helpless tend to experience workplace lock-in, which further reinforces the helplessness. Being locked in has been shown to negatively impact psychological health, including increased depression and decreased mental health (Stengård et al., 2016). Contextually, the phenomenon of being locked into work develops due to the individual's mismatch with the work environment and low self-regulation ability to make changes (Feenstra-Verschure et al., 2024), empirically, however, a positive environmental support will impact high employee performance (Kurniawan et al., 2023). These findings confirm that work engagement is not simply a rational choice, but also reflects psychological and structural dynamics that limit job mobility.

Sandwich Generation

The sandwich generation is an individual who bears financial and care responsibilities for two generations at once, namely parents and children (Miller, 1981). This role places individuals under high role pressure because they must balance work demands and family obligations (Burke & Calvano, 2017). Chisholm (1999) emphasized that working couples with responsibilities for children and parents have been destined to become the sandwich generation for

more than 25 years. The sandwich generation refers to middle-aged individuals who simultaneously bear the needs of children and elderly parents (Schlesinger & Raphael, 1993).

In the context of multigenerational families, sandwich generation individuals face stress, role conflict, and economic burdens, but also demonstrate resilience through positive interpretations of their dual roles and environmental support (Latifah & Hendriani, 2024). In Indonesia, strategies such as financial planning, family communication, and social support play a crucial role in maintaining the resilience of sandwich generation individuals (Syahiti et al., 2025). Family responsibilities also impact career development, where individuals often experience limited professional mobility. However, organizational support and personal coping strategies enable them to maintain career stability and psychological well-being (Devy & Linando, 2025).

Millennial Generation

Berkup (2014) stated that the millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, is a group of individuals born between 1980 and 2001. Millennials grew up alongside the rapid development of digital technology (Dimock, 2019). This generation is characterized by being adaptable, technologically literate, and oriented towards the meaning of work and work-life balance (Budiati et al., 2018). Conducted by DeVaney (2015) shows that millennials are digital natives with a high social awareness and a teamwork orientation. In the workplace, millennials tend to expect opportunities for self-development, a participatory work environment, and hope in carrying out professional roles (Arif, 2021). These characteristics shape how they respond to work pressure and make career decisions, including their tendency to persist in certain jobs.

1. Generation Z

Generation Z are individuals born after millennials and grew up in a highly digitalized environment (Dimock, 2019). Their proximity to technology shapes a mindset that prioritizes speed, symmetry, and efficiency in work (Arif, 2021). Dorina & Dan (2021) shows that Generation Z values mistakes at work, performance recognition, and opportunities for continuous development. These characteristics influence their attitudes toward work and coping strategies amidst economic pressures and family responsibilities.

2. Coping Strategies

Coping is the cognitive and behavioral efforts individuals make to manage demands perceived as stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping strategies are dynamic and depend on an individual's assessment of the situation they face. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) differentiated coping into problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping is directed at addressing the source of stress directly, while emotion-focused coping focuses on maintaining emotional responses when the situation is difficult to change. These two strategies are used flexibly and complement each other, especially in the context of complex work pressures and family responsibilities. Psychological support also needed to anticipate work stress, to be able to survive and improve performance (Suratman, 2021).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological study design to understand the subjective experiences of the sandwich generation in facing the phenomenon of job hugging. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, perceptions, and experiences of individuals in depth in a natural context as stated Sugiyono (2013), while the phenomenological design is used to uncover the nature and meaning of individual life experiences according to Creswell (2009), and according to Harahap (2020) to understand how individuals respond to their existence in society through social interactions. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews boldly using Google Meet, chosen because informants are spread across various regions of Indonesia so it is more efficient in terms of time and distance. The selection of informants used a purposive sampling technique based on certain criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). The selected individuals were from the millennial and generation Z generations who belong to the sandwich generation, experienced job hugging, are of productive age, have worked for at least three years, have families, and still meet the financial needs of their parents. Recruitment of informants was carried out through social media (Instagram, TikTok, and X/Twitter) and the researcher's network of relationships, with a total of five informants. The data used were primary data obtained through semi-structured interviews (Sugiyono, 2013). They were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns or themes of experiences and coping strategies in dealing with work pressure and family responsibilities (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

INFORMAN DATA					
No	Initial	Gender	Age (yo)	Years srvc	Compatibility between Discipline and Workplace
1.	AYV	Female	27	8	Communication Science - CCTV office admin staff
2.	GPP	Male	36	10	Accounting - BUMN (PT Perkebunan Nusantara 1)
3.	SS	Male	33	3	Computer Engineering - IT Solutions
4.	WIA	Female	29	6	Economics Development Studies - Logistics
5.	RY	Male	31	8	Mechanical Engineering - Engineer at PT Epson Indonesia

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation among Millennials and Generation Z

Interview results indicate that all respondents are in the sandwich generation, individuals who bear financial and emotional responsibility for both their nuclear family and their family of origin. This position is the primary context for the emergence of the "hugging job" phenomenon, where respondents choose to remain in jobs that are not entirely satisfying in order to maintain the

family's economic stability. Responsibilities as a sandwich generation member do not always arise due to the physical limitations of parents, but are also influenced by family role norms, particularly their status as the first child. This is reflected in statements by Generation Z respondents who said that this role seemed to be formed automatically, *"My husband and I are both first children, so it's like we were automatically set to share the responsibility of supporting the family"* (AYV). A similar situation was experienced by millennial respondents who had to support their mother and younger siblings after losing their father, *"I am the first child of six siblings... I help with the needs of my mother and three younger siblings"* (GPP). Even for respondents who have lived independently, the role of the sandwich generation is still carried out in the form of financial support, *"We already have our own house, but our parents still help financially"* (WIA).

In this context, job retention emerged as a survival strategy amidst career gaps and high economic risks. Respondents acknowledged job dissatisfaction but were reluctant to take the risk of changing jobs due to concerns about income stability. One respondent explicitly expressed this hesitation, saying, *"I have the intention to resign, but I'm not sure if I'll find a better job if I leave this job"* (AYV). Economic considerations, particularly the high cost of living and family needs, made career decisions increasingly pragmatic. One respondent stated that their decision to stay was based more on necessity than loyalty: *"I stay more out of necessity, not just loyalty"* (SS). Income stability and work benefits were seen as key factors holding respondents back, despite dissatisfaction with the work system and leadership: *"Even though I'm sometimes dissatisfied with the system or leadership, I still choose to stay"* (RY). In some cases, job retention even felt like a form of long-term coercion: *"Every time I want to resign, there's always a weight that makes the decision to retract"* (WIA).

Nevertheless, the decision to stay is not entirely negative. Respondents also identified factors that made them relatively comfortable in their workplace, particularly those related to organizational principles and support. A family-friendly work environment was a key attraction, as expressed by respondents, *"easy leave permission, a family atmosphere, and very supportive of working mothers"* (AYV). Furthermore, the availability of working hours, easily accessible location, and strength-building facilities also strengthened their decision to stay, *"flexible working hours and there are training permits covered by the company"* (SS). Alignment between work and professional interests, a low-pressure work environment, and perceived competence were also significant inhibiting factors, *"a low-pressure work environment and a decent salary"* (RY).

Respondents	Verbatim	Code	Group
AYV	<i>I've been living with my husband. However, because my husband and I are both firstborns, we've been automatically assigned to share the responsibility of providing for the family. Even though our fathers are still healthy.</i>	Sandwich Generation Status	Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation, Including the

	<i>Even though the salary isn't great, if I resign from here, I don't know if I'll find a job with a comparable salary. That's why I'm really thinking about resigning, Sis. If I leave and the salary isn't up to par, what will my family be like?</i>	The Phenomenon of Job Hugging	Millennial Generation and Generation Z	
	<i>Because it's so easy to get leave and other things here, the atmosphere is also family-friendly. Working hours are also punctual, from 8 AM to 5 PM.</i>	Convenience Factors		
	<i>The atmosphere is really nice because I'm at the branch office, so I'm away from the boss. And the very friendly environment for working mothers like me makes me really happy.</i>			
	<i>There is, I think, because my boss just passed away. So it looks like I'll be stepping up to replace him.</i>			
	<i>There is no career ladder, and the boss's policies often change depending on his mood.</i>	Discomfort Factors in the Company		
	<i>Sometimes I ride my motorbike aimlessly while singing along. I also have coffee with my friends, sharing our problems, chatting, listening to K-pop, and so on.</i>	Pursue a Hobby	Strategi Coping Generasi Sandwich dalam Menghadapi Job Hugging	
	<i>Lately I have been focusing on dhikr, also regularly reading the prayer Laa ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kuntu minadzolimin.</i>	Deepen your devotions		
	<i>I'm racking my brain, how can I reach the target or get additional funds from outside?</i>	Using practical solutions as a strategy		
GPP	<i>I now live with my wife and children. So, I'm the eldest of six children. My father is no longer alive, and my mother is a housewife. She helps support her and my three younger siblings.</i>	Sandwich Generation Status	Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation,	

<i>Usually, the explanation is for two things: first, economic factors, and second, work environment factors. ...Of course, in the end, it all comes down to need.</i>	The Phenomenon of Job Hugging	Including the Millennial Generation and Generation Z	
<i>The salary is good</i>	Convenience Factors		
<i>The support system from the environment is quite good.</i>			
<i>There's also ample training, and opportunities for self-development are wide open. Career paths are clear, as long as you're willing to work hard, persevere, and persevere, the opportunity for advancement is significant.</i>			
<i>What makes me less beta is probably being far from my family</i>	Discomfort Factors in the Company		
<i>Self-preservation means we must be more self-aware, meaning we must be more careful in our work, so as not to be careless in carrying out our duties. This way, all responsibilities can be fulfilled properly.</i>	Professionalism in work	Coping strategies used by both generations in facing pressure as a sandwich generation experiencing job hugging	
<i>So yes, I try my best to keep my mind sane, healthy, and happy.</i>	Maintain mental and physical health		
<i>That is the biggest motivation or encouragement for me personally to continue to survive and continue to develop myself. Because in the end, we also have people to make happy.</i>	Use your role as motivation		
<i>Yes, so for me personally, every night as much as possible we try to have Pillow Talk with my wife.</i>	Support from family/partner		
<i>Every month, we always make time to eat together or go on family outings. It's become a routine we try to maintain to ensure we have quality time together. For annual events, we usually have a list or plan, for example, where we want to go on vacation or what we want to do.</i>			

	<i>As for hobbies, I happen to enjoy fishing, Miss. So, whenever I have free time, I always use it to go fishing.</i>	Pursue a hobby		
	<i>We view work as both an obligation and an act of worship. If work is seen as merely a burden or responsibility that can be abandoned at any time, people will often trivialize it and perform it carelessly.</i>	Work as Worship		
SS	<i>Currently, I live with my wife and children. I also help out with my wife's family's needs, so I could say I'm helping out with my in-laws' needs.</i>	Sandwich Generation Status	Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation, Including the Millennial Generation and Generation Z	
	<i>I'm staying more out of necessity, not just loyalty. I'm just being realistic, because the most important thing right now is to keep my family's needs going. ...because Jakarta can have a high cost of living, so I can't make the decision to change jobs without careful consideration. As long as this job can cover my family's needs, I choose to stay.</i>	The Phenomenon of Job Hugging		
	<i>...a field of work that aligns with my passion. I've always been interested in computers and technology, so when I got a job in IT solutions, it felt like a perfect fit.</i>	Convenience Factors		
	<i>... because the working hours are flexible, so you don't have to be rigid about coming in at eight in the morning.</i>			
	<i>In addition, the office location is also strategic and easy to reach.</i>			
	<i>In addition, the office location is also strategic and easy to reach.</i>			
	<i>because our status is that of non-permanent employees.</i>	Discomfort Factors in the Company		
	<i>For that, I would try to learn independently, study and read</i>	Using practical		

	<i>about improving my skills because nowadays, to apply for a job at my age of 33, I have to have at least a certificate.</i>	solutions as a strategy	Coping strategies used by both generations in facing pressure as a sandwich generation experiencing job hugging	
	<i>...we have to be wiser in managing our finances, such as dividing them, because we also have our own needs and must have savings for the future, and we also have to think about what our parents' needs are like.</i>	Managing finances		
WIA	<i>I don't live with my parents, but my husband and I already have our own house thanks to a mortgage. So, it's more about helping our parents financially.</i>	Sandwich Generation Status	Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation, Including the Millennial Generation and Generation Z	
	<i>It's more of a compulsion to keep working. Like, whether you like it or not, no matter what the circumstances, no matter how difficult it is, you have to keep working.</i>	The Phenomenon of Job Hugging		
	<i>It's clear, it's very clear. Even if I've managed to make it this far, it feels like, oh my, I'm so tired. Over the years, I've often thought about resigning, resigning, resigning, but I'm like, oh well, wait, wait, wait. So every time I decide to resign, there's always a weighting factor that makes me change my mind.</i>			
	<i>When it comes to comfort, it's actually because of the friends. The environment is pleasant, and the friends are supportive.</i>	Convenience Factors		
	<i>...the main reason is obviously the salary range. The salary is actually quite decent compared to other similar companies. In my opinion, the salary is quite good, even higher than average, especially when you add in overtime.</i>			
	<i>There are many reasons why discomfort sometimes arises at work. The first is, of course, pressure, especially from the Head Office (HO). The pressure from the HO is enormous, especially since I</i>	Discomfort Factors in the Company		

<p><i>work for an international company headquartered in South Korea, while the HO is in Jakarta.</i></p>			
<p><i>The second reason might be the distance. When I was living in a boarding house, I could manage my time quite well. But now that I've taken out a mortgage, the distance from my house to the office is quite far – around 45 minutes to an hour. That's what makes it a bit uncomfortable, because I spend most of my time traveling, so I'm already exhausted by the time I get to the office.</i></p>			
<p><i>Furthermore, where I work, there's a trend of overtime, especially at the end of the month, usually from the 20th to the beginning of the following month. Even though the overtime is paid, I still sometimes have to work on Sundays.</i></p>			
<p><i>Sometimes, if I'm really tired, I usually take a day off in the middle of the week. So, for example, if I'm feeling really bored, I just take a day off at home.</i></p>	<p>Take Time off to Rest</p>	<p>Coping strategies used by both generations in facing pressure as a sandwich generation experiencing job hugging</p>	
<p><i>...financial planning. On the one hand, we still have to bear the burdens we already have, but on the other hand, we also have to prepare for the future of our young family, especially now that we have children. So, how can we ensure that our children's education doesn't fall behind, yet still provides them with access to a good education, while also avoiding creating a second-generation sandwich.</i></p>	<p>Managing finances</p>		
<p><i>The most helpful thing is actually the support from my friends. They provide a mutually understanding environment. We're all under the same pressures, in the same environment, and we all share the same challenges and burdens of</i></p>	<p>Support from coworkers</p>		

	<i>work. So, friends and a pleasant environment are the biggest help.</i>			
RY	<i>I'm married and have two children, one still a baby and one already in school. My little family lives in our own home. Even though my parents don't live there, I still help them with living expenses, especially with monthly expenses and healthcare. I also occasionally help my older sibling if there's an emergency. So, my responsibilities are divided between my immediate family and my parents.</i>	Sandwich Generation Status	Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation, Including the Millennial Generation and Generation Z	
	<i>I stay because this job provides stability and a sense of security. Finding a new job in the current economic climate is not easy. At this company, I earn a decent salary for my family, and the private healthcare benefits are very helpful. Although I sometimes feel bored and face bosses who I feel are not performing optimally, I remain professional and focus on the positive aspects of this job.</i>	The Phenomenon of Job Hugging		
	<i>That responsibility is actually the main reason I stay. With two small children and parents I still support, I need the certainty of a stable income and benefits. ...so even though I sometimes feel dissatisfied with the system or my boss, I still choose to stay.</i>			
	<i>I am interested in product quality which requires good skills in the injection molding process where the quality of the injection process greatly influences the finished product of the printer parts.</i>	Convenience Factors		
	<i>In terms of work environment, there is minimum pressure and a decent income.</i>			
	<i>The inability to maintain it is due to the career advancement system which is still not good in my</i>			

	<p><i>opinion because currently the company is in a transition period with the first generation starting to retire and to achieve it I have to patiently wait for several years until the position becomes vacant.</i></p>	<p>Discomfort Factors in the Company</p>		
	<p><i>And I think another factor is that my current boss's capabilities are not good, especially in terms of communication and wrong management style.</i></p>			
	<p><i>If I feel dissatisfied with the situation at work, especially due to the incompetence of my superiors, I try to focus on the things I can still control.</i></p>	<p>Using practical solutions as a strategy</p>	<p>Coping strategies used by both generations in facing pressure as a sandwich</p>	
	<p><i>A sense of responsibility and support from my family. I know so much depends on me, and that's a strong reason to persevere, even though I sometimes get bored or fed up with the situation at work.</i></p>	<p>Use your role as motivation</p>	<p>generation experiencing job hugging</p>	
	<p><i>Sometimes I also listen to music, exercise or pray to calm my mind.</i></p>	<p>Pursue a Hobby and Deepen your devotions</p>		
	<p><i>Additionally, I have several coworkers with whom I can share light work-related issues, including difficulties dealing with my boss. That support means a lot.</i></p>	<p>Support from coworkers</p>		

On the other hand, respondents also revealed several factors that trigger job dissatisfaction and a desire to leave their jobs. Obstacles to career development were the most prominent issue, particularly related to unclear career paths and inconsistent superior policies (AYV). Structural work pressure, particularly from the head office, long distances from home, and high levels of overtime also contributed to work dissatisfaction (WIA). Furthermore, the quality of leadership and superior management styles were also considered contributing to job dissatisfaction (RY). "Superior capabilities are poor, especially in communication and management style" (RY).

Overall, these findings indicate that the embrace of work among millennials and Generation Z, members of the sandwich generation, is shaped by a trade-off between the need for economic stability and experiences of job dissatisfaction. Family responsibilities act as a structural factor limiting career mobility, leading respondents to choose to stay despite facing work pressure, exhaustion, and obstacles to career development.

Summary Table of Results of the Job Hugging Phenomenon Experienced by the Sandwich Generation, Including the Millennial Generation and Generation Z

Sandwich Generation Status
All respondents cover the core needs of the family (partner and children) while also helping parents or siblings financially, whether living in the same house or separately.
Job Hugging
Staying at a job despite feeling tired, dissatisfied, or wanting to resign due to demands for financial stability and fear of the job
Reasons to Stay at Job
Family economic needs, responsibilities as a sandwich generation, high cost of living, and the need for a steady income
Convenience Factors
Supportive work environment, flexible working hours, easy leave, conducive work atmosphere, stable income and facilities
Discomfort Factors in the Company
Lack of clear career paths, high work pressure, long distance from home, excessive overtime, and ineffective leadership styles of superiors

Coping strategies used by both generations in facing pressure as a sandwich generation experiencing job hugging

Interview results indicate that respondents from the millennial and generation Z generations, who are in the sandwich generation, developed various coping strategies to deal with the pressures of dual roles and work-related conditions. These strategies are used to maintain emotional, psychological, and work-role desires amidst limited career mobility. The findings indicate that respondents used two main forms of coping strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, which are often used simultaneously and complement each other. In problem-focused coping strategies, respondents focused on concrete actions that they could still control. One prominent effort was increasing self-capacity through skills development. One respondent stated that job competition and age factors encouraged them to strengthen their competencies, *"at 33 years old, if I want to apply for a job, I must at least have a certificate"* (SS). Furthermore, financial management is also an important strategy in dealing with the pressures of being a sandwich generation, especially to maintain family economic sustainability and prevent the formation of a sandwich generation cycle in the next generation, *"so that children's education is still fulfilled but does not create a second sandwich generation"* (WIA). Another strategy involved maintaining professionalism at work by increasing caution and responsibility. *"I have to be more self-aware so that all responsibilities can be fulfilled well"* (GPP).

Furthermore, respondents utilized emotion-focused coping strategies to manage emerging emotional stress. These strategies were realized through activities that provided calm and psychological recovery, such as pursuing hobbies. *"Sometimes I listen to music and exercise"* (RY), and taking short breaks when fatigue increased.

"When I'm really tired, I take a day off in the middle of the week" (WIA). Respondents also prioritized maintaining mental and physical health: "I try to keep my mind sane, healthy, and happy" (GPP). Furthermore, religious practices served as a source of inner peace and psychological strengthening: "I practice dhikr (remembrance of God) and regularly read prayers" (AYV). Social support also played a significant role in respondents' coping strategies. Support from partners and family was obtained through regular communication and togetherness. "Every night we try to have Pillow Talk and have family time" (GPP). In addition, a supportive work environment also helps respondents manage stress, "my colleagues at work understand each other because they are under the same pressure" (WIA). Some respondents also interpreted family responsibilities as a source of motivation to survive, "I know many depend on me, and that is a reason to keep going" (RY). Overall, these findings indicate that millennials and generation Z, who are included in the sandwich generation, actively combine problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping to deal with job-hugging pressure. This strategy allows respondents to continue to carry out work and family roles functionally despite conditions of limited career mobility and ongoing role pressure.

Summary Table of Coping Strategy Results Used by Both Generations in Facing Pressure as a Sandwich Generation Experiencing Job Hugging

<i>Problem-focused coping</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using practical solutions as a strategy 2. Managing finances 3. Professionalism in work
<i>Emotion-focused coping</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue a hobby 2. Take time off to rest 3. Maintain mental and physical health 4. Deepen your devotions 5. Support from family/partner 6. Support from coworkers 7. Use your role as motivation

The job hugging experienced by the sandwich Generation (for Millennial Generation and Generation Z)

The research results show that all respondents fall into the sandwich generation category, bearing financial responsibility for both their nuclear and family families. This status is not determined by residence patterns, but rather by intergenerational economic burdens, as suggested (Miller, 1981) The role of the sandwich generation shapes respondents' work decisions, particularly their

tendency to maintain employment despite dissatisfaction. Economic stability is a top priority in the face of complex and demanding family roles, making job retention a survival strategy (Burke & Calvano, 2017). This finding aligns with Neal & Hammer (2017), who stated that the sandwich generation maintains employment to fulfill financial responsibilities, not solely for job satisfaction.

This phenomenon aligns with the concept of being locked at the job, a condition where individuals feel dissatisfied but face limitations in leaving their jobs (Feenstra-Verschure et al., 2023). Economic pressures and family responsibilities reinforce respondents' tendency to avoid even the slightest job risk, making maintaining employment the most rational option. In this context, job retention reflects adaptation to structural constraints, rather than loyalty or emotional permanence to the job.

The sense of security derived from income stability and organizational tolerance for family needs were the primary factors motivating respondents to remain. This aligns with the concept of job hugging, which emphasizes maintaining a job that offers security even if it isn't ideal career-wise (Rush, 2025). Conversely, dissatisfaction with work systems, leadership, and career opportunities indicates a mismatch between the individual and the work environment, potentially leading to feelings of powerlessness, according to research by Stengård et al. (2017), even leading to a state of being locked-in or double locked-in (Muhonen, 2010).

This study found no significant differences between millennials and Generation Z in their interpretations of job hugging. The pressures of economic responsibilities as the sandwich generation proved more dominant than differences in generational characteristics. Therefore, job hugging in this study is more appropriately understood as a response to structural demands and family roles rather than as a reflection of intergenerational work values.

Coping strategies for the sandwich generation who experience hugging jobs

The research results show that millennials and Generation Z, who are part of the sandwich generation and experience job conflict, use two primary coping strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. These strategies reflect respondents' efforts to simultaneously manage the pressures arising from work demands and family responsibilities, as understood within the framework of coping as a dynamic process for dealing with stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping is manifested through direct management of sources of stress that are still considered controllable, such as managing finances, improving work professionalism, and seeking practical solutions. In the context of job conflict, this strategy serves to maintain economic stability and job security amidst limited career mobility. This finding aligns with the concept of problem-focused coping, which focuses on controlling the situation when individuals perceive there is still room for intervention in addressing the source of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Meanwhile, emotion-focused coping is used to manage the psychological impact of stressors that cannot be directly changed. This strategy is manifested through engaging in hobby activities, taking breaks, practicing religion (Makarim & Suratman, 2024), utilizing social support from family and

coworkers, and interpreting roles and responsibilities as a source of motivation. This form of coping demonstrates respondents' efforts to maintain emotional balance and psychological resilience to sustainably fulfill their work and family roles. That emotion-focused coping functions to regulate emotional responses when changing the situation is not possible (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Overall, the use of both coping strategies demonstrates a pragmatic pattern of adaptation in dealing with structural pressures as the sandwich generation experiencing job disruption. No significant differences were found between millennials and Generation Z, indicating that role demands and economic pressures are more dominant in shaping coping strategies than differences in generational characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that the "job-hugging" phenomenon among the millennial and Gen Z sandwich generations is strongly influenced by their dual roles in fulfilling intergenerational economic responsibilities. The sandwich generation's status is not determined by residence patterns, but rather by the economic burden on both the nuclear and family of origin families. This condition shapes respondents' employment decisions, with work perceived as a crucial source of economic security, encouraging them to persist despite facing exhaustion, boredom, and job dissatisfaction. Job-hugging, in this context, is an adaptive response to limited employment options and high economic risks, not simply a reflection of job loyalty or satisfaction.

Furthermore, respondents employed complementary coping strategies, combining problem-focused and emotion-focused coping, to deal with the pressures of dual roles in the "job-hugging" situation. Problem-focused coping is used to manage controllable aspects, such as financial management, skill development, and professionalism, while emotion-focused coping plays a role in maintaining emotional balance through rest, personal activities, religious practices, and social support. The combination of these two strategies enables respondents to maintain economic stability while safeguarding psychological and family well-being.

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