
Millennials and the Sandwich Generation: The Challenge of Adapting Self-Identity Across Time

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the term millennial has been heard very often. Millennials or Generation Y are the generation born in the 1980s - early 2000s. At this time, the millennial generation has an age range of 25-40 years and is in the position of the sandwich generation. The sandwich generation itself is the people who are squeezed between the demands of two generations at once, namely parents and children plus the demands of their own life. The sandwich generation now carries a fairly heavy burden considering their lifetimes that have passed the generational transition line which is quite extreme. This study aims: 1) To know the definition of millennials and the sandwich generation in depth. 2) Studying more about the role of millennials who are also the sandwich generation. 3) Knowing the adaptation pattern of the millennial generation and the sandwich generation in the industrial 4.0 era. And this writing uses a descriptive qualitative research methodology by using many data variables that are appropriate in order to produce directed and accountable writing. As technology is developing, everything is moving fast. Likewise, the current generation must adapt to conditions that are far different from the early life they lived. So that this significant difference affects many social aspects in terms of the intergenerational relationship which then gives birth to a mindset and parenting pattern that is qualified by the times.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Family is the closest bond of every individual. Either the bond is created by will or not. Family is a place where a person can take shelter and shelter from the hustle and bustle of a very scary world. Especially in the midst of the digital era where everything moves and moves so fast. Everyone is required to be able to adapt to the rhythm and flow of development that always grows every second.

If you hear the word family, there will definitely be many definitions in our minds. Family can be interpreted broadly but also has a simple meaning. Sometimes the family is understood as a large group consisting of grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, cousins, and even the presence of a step family adjusts to the conditions of each family. However, the family has the simplest definition, namely the existence of parents and children. Where a child will not be present in the world without the involvement of his parents. And this family can be understood as the family that is most closely related to each individual.

Family is the first and last home for most people. Because it is undeniable that by some people the family is considered the most terrible place due to the bad experiences they often experience. But even so, the role of the family cannot be separated from the story of one's life history. The minimum family consists of parents and children. From this arrangement, we can know that the family is composed and formed by several generations, where each generation passes through a different era from the other generations. This difference then gives rise to many very interesting events to study.

The family is the simplest social replica. Because in it there are relationships between several individuals, therefore the family is categorized as a social relationship. Social relations in this family occupy the position of the earliest social chain. In the family structure, of course, consists of several generations. And so far, there are several generation groups that are generally known, namely, *first, Traditionalist*. *Traditionalist* is the oldest generation today. People belonging to this generation were born in 1925 - 1945. They are people who during their lifetime had witnessed the occurrence of World War II, *smart buddies*. Living in tough times, they are known as the hard-working generation (Writer, 2016).

Second, Baby Boomers. The generation *Baby Boomers* are people born in the period 1946 to 1960. Initially the term *Baby Boomers* was used among Americans and surrounding areas. This is because during this period there was an increase in the birth rate so large that it was like a birth explosion. Born after the war and during the reformation period of various countries, these baby boomers have had so many experiences and adaptations to an unstable environment as a child. It is not uncommon for these baby boomers to experience so many changes in the fields of education and politics (Kurniasih, 2021).

Third, Generation X. Generation X is the generation born between the vulnerable in 1961-1981 (Vania, 2020). Generation X grew up in a time of entirely new technological developments such as mobile phones and laptops, as well as the economic hardships of the 1980s. Generation X is considered as a generation that is independent, hardworking, career-oriented, flexible, proficient in technology, logical, resourceful, and good problem solver (Utami, 2021).

Fourth, Generation Y. Millennial generation or what is also known as Generation Y was born around 1980 to 2000. So, it can be said that the millennial generation is today's young generation who are currently around 15-34 years old. This age range corresponds to the average age of students studying in college, which is around 19-34 years old (Hidayatullah et al., 2018). The term millennials or millennials was coined by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1987. They coined the term when children born in 1982 entered preschool, and the media at the time began to refer to it as a group connected to the new millennium upon graduating high school in 2000. The two wrote about this group in the book *Generations: The History of America's Future Generations and Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (Mansyur, 2018).

The increasing number of millennials (Generation Y) entering the workforce with privileges that tend to be different from previous generations has become one of the new challenges for the world of work. Millennials are often referred to as a generation that likes freedom and flexibility such as the freedom to work, study and do business. The Millennial Generation, which also has another name Generation Y, is a group of people born after the 1980s to 1997 (Ambarwati et al., 2018). There are also those who argue that Generation Y are people born between 1980 and 2000 (Vania, 2020). They are called millennials because they are the only generation that has passed the second millennium since the theory of this generation was first introduced by Karl Mannheim in 1923 (Ambarwati et al., 2018).

The existence of the millennial generation, which is so playing a role in the world of work, places them they're in the position *sandwich*. Many Americans balance multiple parenting responsibilities for their children and aging family members. Researchers have called this population the "sandwich generation" because they have the responsibility of caring for children and aging family members (Ferrante & Derigne, 2012). And that's why today, millennials are taking on 2 roles at the same time as being the sandwich generation. between children and their parents.

Fifth, Generation Z. *Generation Z* Generation Z are individuals born in 2000 and after (Vania, 2020). In many analyses, experts state that Gen Z has very different traits and characteristics from the previous generation. This generation is labelled as *a boundary-less generation*. Ryan Jenkins (2017) in his article entitled "*Four Reasons Generation Z will be the Most Different Generation*" for example states that Gen Z has different expectations, preferences, and work perspectives and is considered challenging for the organization. Gen Z characters are more diverse, global in nature, and have an influence on the culture and attitudes of most people. One thing that stands out, Gen Z is able to take advantage of technological changes in various aspects of their lives. The technology they use is as natural as they breathe (Rakhmah, 2021).

From the definition of several generations above, especially regarding generations Y, X, and Z, which are the most numerous today, it can be concluded that generation X is the most suitable to be positioned as the sandwich generation considering the vulnerable age of generation X who dominates the world of work. Being a millennial generation and a sandwich generation at the same time is not easy. Millennials have to face many challenges. The existence of differences in the flow of life histories, differences in parenting patterns, differences

in technology, differences in mindset, and various other differences are a big challenge for the millennial generation to be able to act as mediators as well as buildings that bridge the differences that exist between parents and children who are their responsibility at the same time. Pressure from parents and the demands of circumstances make the sandwich position occupied by the millennial generation, including a difficult position. And this is where an interesting topic of discussion arises.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this paper is a qualitative descriptive research method combined with a phenomenological approach. This research is also included in library research which uses secondary data obtained from journals, scientific articles, and other doctrines related to the subject being studied. In addition, tertiary data such as the internet and sources other than secondary data are also used as a complement with limited numbers so as not to damage the meaning and purpose of this paper and can produce accountable writing.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Playing the role of a millennial and a sandwich generation at the same time is a challenge. Looking at the role of the sandwich generation itself, the sandwich generation is a generation that is included in the development of the middle age range. Middle age is a time when more and more individuals become part of the sandwich generation, which is faced with multiple parenting obligations and responsibilities for young children, adolescents, early adults and simultaneously taking on new responsibilities towards elderly parents (Alphonso, 2016). Although definitively the sandwich generation is the person who bears the burden of financing and living for 1 generation above and 1 generation below, which means that elderly people aged 40-60 years can still be included in it, the sandwich generation today is classified as Millennials have a much more varied burden. This is due to the very different eras that have been and are being faced by the millennial generation.

Today, the world of work is very much dominated by the millennial generation. In Indonesia itself, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2016 the number of workers from the generation X group was almost the same as the number of workers from the millennial generation. The Baby Boomers generation of workers continues to decline in numbers. Slowly, the group of generation X workers will also experience the same thing. This phenomenon has been marked by the arrival of the millennial generation as the workforce, which has reduced the composition of the Baby Boomers generation in 2014 and 2016 (Yuniarto, 2019). The above phenomenon indirectly explains to us those jobs are slowly being flooded with millennial workers. In addition, with the data above, it can be assumed that millennial workers have entered productive working ages, some of which are possible to have families. Therefore, the possibility of the millennial generation concurrently being the sandwich generation is very large.

As an ordinary individual, a person is sometimes overwhelmed by the burden of his own life. Moreover, the sandwich generation who has to bear the burden of himself as well as support his parents and small family if they are married. And the challenges become more difficult with the presence of children. In such circumstances the challenges that must be faced by the sandwich generation include, *first*, the economic burden. The economic burden is the main challenge for the sandwich generation. Sometimes you just don't reach the point of satisfaction and adequacy, especially if you have to support many people at the same time.

For the millennial generation of sandwiches, economic demands have always been a problem. Most married couples strongly agree that financial matters are the issue that contributes the most problems to the sandwich generation (Olson et al., 2003). Financial factors are a fundamental aspect in maintaining the survival of the sandwich generation and the people it bears. Not infrequently their daily or monthly expenses must be allocated to meet the daily and monthly needs of parents and children, both primary and secondary needs. (Fast et al., 2001).

The most obvious difficulty faced by the sandwich generation from a financial aspect is that the sandwich generation is indirectly required to always maintain economic stability in order to maintain the interests of the people under their care. With strong and stable finances, economic factors will not cause serious problems. However, the scenario could be different if the finances of the sandwich generation had not yet stabilized. This imbalance is a factor that often threatens the finances of the sandwich generation in the maintenance of its family (Sarnon et al., 2014).

In addition to financial problems, the sandwich generation is also faced with the constraints of a growing era. The developing era has implications for the increasing economic value. This increase in economic value makes the economic burden of the sandwich generation even heavier in trying to provide for the needs of food, clothing, shelter, health, safety, and ensuring the welfare of life. The sandwich generation with low incomes is more at risk of facing economic problems than those with high incomes. Low income plus high cost of living demands has an impact on the birth of a frugal and simple lifestyle in the life of the sandwich generation so that the costs of care, maintenance, health, education, and personal needs can continue to be met. If this financial

problem is not addressed immediately, it is possible that other problems will arise that will further complicate the situation of the sandwich generation (Sarnon et al., 2014).

Taking care of parents is a challenge, especially if the parents suffer from chronic diseases (Koh & MacDonald, 2006). Caring for and caring for parents costs a lot of money (Acton & Kang, 2001). In general, the present sandwich generation immediately combines the care and maintenance of all those under its care under one umbrella. This is done so that the sandwich generation can still carry out their role professionally in the world of work. In addition, so that there is an efficiency between the main job and side work carried out by the sandwich generation to meet the needs of their family (Haddock et al., 2006).

A study in the United States states that the condition of the sandwich generation affects performance at work. A sandwich generation worker usually shows lower productivity (Binns & Markow, 1999). Many western scholars have to sacrifice their time in work to take care of their parents (Schul et al., 2003). The working sandwich generation has to take frequent vacations to look after the family. And not infrequently they get disturbed during work due to the burden of responsibility to always meet the needs of their parents and family (Adington-Hall et al., 1992).

From the description above, it can be seen that the economic burden of the sandwich generation is very heavy. Moreover, coupled with those with low incomes. We know that millennials themselves, especially millennials who have just entered the world of work, with experience as they are, must be very overwhelmed if they have to meet the needs of themselves and their families at the same time. The lack of experience and limited ability usually affects the amount of income they will get. On the other hand, the economic value that also increases over time makes the economy of the sandwich generation unbalanced. Not to mention if there is an unpredictable increase in the price of basic commodities. Another factor is an instant lifestyle. This instant-paced lifestyle is a separate trial for millennials, plus the latest trends often appear that seem to have to be followed.

Spending more than earning requires millennials of the sandwich generation to rack their brains about how they can meet all their needs and the needs of those under them. It becomes a challenge again if there are other external problems such as the unresolved debts of parents during youth where there are still many parents out there who think that old debts must be borne by their children when they are able to earn their own income. Millennials of the sandwich generation also add to the burden when a parent or child falls ill. Moreover, the disease is classified as a chronic disease and requires further financing. When a parent or child is sick, not only is the economic burden a problem, but they are also forced to work hard to pay for all the necessities in addition to having to look after and care for them.

The conditions above are not easy conditions. Especially by the millennial sandwich generation whose income has not been solid, their job is not fixed, they have other responsibilities outside the family, and so on. Millennials of the sandwich generation, who in fact have just built a career, have to succumb to circumstances and are forced to be left behind by millennials of their age. At a time when millennials of his age are slowly occupying stable positions, he is still struggling with the tenacity of life because many people depend on him under his armpits.

Second, the emotional burden. Being the backbone at such a young age is already a challenge. Moreover, coupled with the existence of other parties who also depend on it. The tough economy, job demands, not to mention other external problems allow the millennial sandwich generation to get into emotional conflict with themselves. Basically, humans as social beings cannot live alone without the help of others. Physical needs (clothing, food, shelter), social needs (association, recognition) and psychological needs including curiosity, security, feelings of religiosity, cannot be fulfilled without the help of others. Especially if the person is facing problems, both light and heavy. At times like that a person will seek social support from the people around him, so that he feels valued, cared for and loved (Margiani, 2013). But what would happen if at a time like this he also had to bear the burden of others. When he was tired and struggling but there was no one who could support him to rest. This is what the millennial sandwich generation is facing. At a time when people his age are trying to build good emotional control, seek an established life, create a decent life, the millennial sandwich generation must fight for the same thing coupled with pressure from family that some millennials do not face.

It is undeniable, sometimes unexpected problems arise that come from the family, either from parents, children, or spouses. The stress caused by these problems will ultimately affect the health of the millennial sandwich generation itself. The diseases that can be suffered if the millennial sandwich generation experience chronic stress or suffer from stress for a long time include heart disease, obesity, impaired concentration, digestive problems, worsening skin conditions for people with eczema, and many more (Fitri, 2013). This condition will be even worse if there is no other person who can replace his role even if only temporarily to be able to meet the needs of his family's life. And if that happens, in the end, the millennial sandwich generation must force themselves to survive and earn a living even though they need rest. This is a vicious cycle that could happen at any time to the millennial sandwich generation.

Lack of social support can also be a stressor for the millennial sandwich generation. According to Zimet, et al. (1988) social support consists of three aspects, namely: 1) Family Support, namely family support, namely

support that comes from the family; 2) Special People Support, namely special people support is support that comes from people who are considered special; 3) Friends support, namely peer support is support that comes from peers. When viewed from the state of the millennial sandwich generation, these things are quite difficult to obtain. Not without reason, first, it is not uncommon to find the family does not provide good social support. For the millennial sandwich generation, it is the family that contributes the most pressure apart from other aspects. On the other hand, if the millennial sandwich generation expects social support from their peers, in reality their peers also experience the same thing. So that it is more appropriate to give each other social support and not just expect social support.

Prolonged stress can damage a person's psychology. Tired physique and restless heart can make the millennial sandwich generation think not clearly. This situation is very worrying because he could do things that harm himself. Now there are so many cases because of stress by family and economic demands, the sandwich generation of women is willing to do less decent jobs such as being commercial sex workers. Because for them the job is a shortcut to get away from the existing demands so that it can save them from stress. And that decision is a decision that indirectly is a decision that hurts themselves.

The scariest thing about this stress risk is the possibility of suicide. Because millennials are a productive generation and some of them have just entered the millennial age, not a few of them are still in college. Millennials of the sandwich generation who are still in college must face other pressures, namely academic pressure which is also their responsibility. And this situation often puts the millennial sandwich generation in a state of severe stress that can injure their psychological conditions. So that some of them prefer to end their lives because of the high academic demands.

Third, differences in parenting patterns. The difference in parenting here is experienced by the millennial sandwich generation who have children. The challenges here are more focused on Education and emotional. Millennials of the sandwich generation must be able to adapt to an era where the parenting style they received as a child could not fully be applied to their children. As we all know, parenting in the past tends to be tougher than today. Early parents were strong enough to punish their children physically. They can flog their children for committing minor or major wrongdoings. However, now it is rarely applied because it can be considered as violence against children (Nuramdani, 2021). And from this difference, it is not uncommon to have disputes between millennials and their parents. Millennials of the sandwich generation who have children, while working, inevitably have to entrust their children to their grandparents. So that in the end children will get two different parenting styles, namely parenting from their grandmothers and grandfathers when their parents work and also parenting from their own parents when they arrive home. Not infrequently there are disputes between the millennial sandwich generation and their parents about the ideal parenting style for their children.

The thing that can be felt the most is education related to technology. We can know if the current generation is the generation of igeration or the internet generation (Christiani & Ikasari, 2020). Meanwhile, parents of the sandwich generation millennials, the majority of whom are Generation X, think that excessive use of gadgets is a bad thing for children's character education. In addition, Generation Z's fairly open relationship cannot be easily tolerated by Generation Y. For example, the use of slang words (seasonal variety of languages) is considered strange by their grandparents and even their own parents.

Millennials of the sandwich generation who already have children must succumb to circumstances. She had to sacrifice most of her time to provide for the family and only a small part of the time to take care of her children. He must also be able to filter and adjust the parenting pattern for his children. Most of the millennials of the sandwich generation must have faced harsh parenting. So, they are determined to be able to break the vicious chain and restore and create better parenting styles for their children.

This challenge is not a challenge that can be easily faced. Sometimes the lack of intensity of meeting and interacting between children and parents causes a loose relationship between the two of them. Because sandwich generation millennials have to spend a lot of time at work and leave temporary care for their children to their grandmothers and grandfathers, it cannot be denied that the relationship between sandwich generation millennials and their grandparents is better than their relationship with other people. his own parents. Although today's technological sophistication has helped many things in aspects of life, direct interaction and communication or touch in touch still dominates and has a far greater influence in relation to problems of social relations in the family. And new problems will arise if the millennial sandwich generation is not able to provide a balanced parenting pattern that is in accordance with today's conditions. In this position, the millennial sandwich generation must be the party that is able to bridge the differences that have been, is, and will occur as well as being a filter for things that are no longer needed.

4. CONCLUSION

The Sandwich Generation is a generation that has to bear the needs of two generations at once plus its own needs. Being the sandwich generation is a challenge in itself. This is because the demands of life are not small. Being a sandwich generation is not easy, especially if the position of the sandwich generation is the millennial

generation. Millennials who are just or are at the beginning of their career must face many challenges. Millennials must be able to adapt to a very developed era. The difference in the life he lived as a child and the world today is very different. These differences then cause problems in the lives they live.

The challenges faced by the millennial sandwich generation are about the economy, stress, and parenting. Finance is a very sensitive issue for the millennial sandwich generation. Because it is not easy to make a living for many people when they are not fully experienced in the world of work. Or just starting a career. Sometimes it becomes a problem when a parent or their child is sick. Apart from having to work to find medical expenses, they also have to spend their time caring for their sick parents or children. In addition, there are other costs that the millennial sandwich generation must also prepare, such as the basic costs of clothing, food, and housing. Then there are also educational costs and urgent funds if needed.

Circumstances like the one above allows the millennial sandwich generation to fall into stressful conditions. The heavy burdens of life and heavy problems have shaken the psychological state of the millennial sandwich generation. And this situation will have an impact on other aspects of life. Because the problems that arise are a chain of problems for other problems.

And the last one is about parenting. The differences in the parenting styles that the millennial generation receives from their parents and the parenting styles that the millennial generation must provide for their children are definitely different. Circumstances that have changed significantly have implications for the education received. The old style of parenting that tends to be harsh if applied at this time will be considered as a violence. The sandwich generation has to spend most of their time working, leaving the care of their children to grandparents and grandparents. So that their children get 2 parenting patterns at once. And it is a challenge for the millennial sandwich generation to be able to adjust and bridge the existing differences in order to create beautiful harmony between generations.

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