

The Problem Of "Sandwich Generation" In The Depok City Government Bureaucracy

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Abstract

In the Depok City Government, 52% of Depok City Government employees are sandwich generation. Sandwich generation consists of 21% traditional sandwich, 18% club sandwich generation and 13% open faced sandwich generation. Non-sandwich generation consists of 40% who only have children or no parents/elderly dependents and 8% who do not have either parents or children. The high number of sandwich generation has the potential to make some employees experience role conflict, because they have to fulfill their needs, the needs of the generation below them and the needs of the generation above them. Therefore, the Depok City Government has a role to manage 52% of the existing sandwich generation. The sandwich generation for the government is one of the target points that must be reached in the development process. This study recommends several things, including the need to provide education about financial independence, financial management, and investment for the State Civil Apparatus (ASN); provide education and guidance for ASNs who have not entered the sandwich generation circle so that they can prepare for marriage mentally and manage health properly; and the need for handling with financial patterns and strengthening existing social security.

Keywords: Sandwich generation, Depok City Government, civil servants, bureaucracy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sandwich Generation is a generation of adults who have to bear the lives of 3 generations: their parents, themselves, and their children. This condition is analogous to a *sandwich*, where a piece of meat is crushed by 2 pieces of bread. The two loaves of bread are likened to parents (upper generation) and children (lower generation), while the main content of the *sandwich* in the form of meat, mayonnaise, and sauce that is crushed by the bread is likened to oneself.

Currently, there are many writings about the *sandwich* generation, especially demographers and economists, but for the government environment, not many have written about the ASN *sandwich* generation. Therefore, it is necessary to survey the existence of *sandwich* generation in the government environment which can be one of the reference materials and considerations for policy making in HR management or ASN, both in terms of welfare, performance management, discipline and ethics, retirement preparation and other related policies.

Depok City Government currently has 6,450 ASNs, among which there is allegedly a *sandwich generation*. This *sandwich generation* condition if not managed properly in human resource management will have an impact on work productivity, which in turn affects the performance of achieving the vision and mission of the organization that has been set. As an academic study and policy material, it is necessary to map the *sandwich generation* condition within the Depok City Government.

Sandwich Generation is a term popularized by Dorothy A. Miller in a journal entitled "*The Sandwich Generation: Adult Children of the Aging*" in 1981, where the *Sandwich Generation* or *sandwich generation* is in a position crushed between two different generations, namely between their aging parents and on the other hand the existence of their children or their siblings who still need help with ages ranging from 18 years or more. Burk (2017) in his book *The Traditional Sandwich Generation* also argues that the *sandwich generation* is an individual who is squeezed between two generations with an age range of 50-60 years, with aging parents, children and even grandchildren. According to Carol Abaya, an *Aging and Elder Care Expert* (in Abramson 2015) explains that there are three types of *sandwich* generation. First, the *Traditional Sandwich Generation* is described as a condition that requires a person to care for elderly parents who need care and also care for their own children. Second, *Club Sandwich Generation* is those around 50-60 years old who are torn between elderly parents and children who are starting to mature, as well as the presence of grandchildren in their midst. Lastly, the *Open Faced Sandwich Generation* describes anyone who is involved in the care of their parents.

In addition, Miller (1981) also stated that the *sandwich* generation is closely related to role conflicts that can have various impacts. They have to pay for their family's main needs, such as paying debts, paying for the health and education of family members, in addition to meeting their own needs. The dual roles carried out by the *sandwich*

generation can have implications for health decline, increased stress, and the inability to fulfill balance in their lives, especially as a worker.

Looking at the age structure of the population of Depok City in 2022, 231,489 (11.09 percent) of the population aged 50-59 years old were dominated by 50.31 percent of the male population and 49.69 percent of the female population (Depok Dalam Angka Tahun 2022, BPS Depok City). Some of them work as civil servants in the Depok City Government. Therefore, their existence is deemed necessary to be traced, so that as a worker his life balance can be maintained.

In this study, the authors used the Scopus database to provide comprehensive information about various previous research results related to *sandwich generation* with the following keywords: TITLE ("sandwich generation"). Scopus is one of the largest databases indexing international scientific publications that has a high reputation.

This research also uses bibliometric studies that can reveal patterns of document utilization, literature development or information sources in a subject area. Bibliometrics includes two types of studies: descriptive and evaluative. Descriptive studies consist of the productivity of articles, books, and other types by looking at patterns such as the type of work of the author, the level of collaboration, the productivity of the author, the institution where the author works, and the subject of the article. While evaluative studies analyze the use of references by counting references or citations in research articles, books, or other available formats (Pattah, 2013).

In addition, *co-word-based* mapping was also used in this study. According to Sulistyo-Basuki (2002), "*co-word-based* mapping is a frequency-based mapping of words that appear in a document (or its title and/or abstract)". The frequency of words that appear in the document allows us to determine the intensity of information contained in each subject of a document. Intensity can be used as an indicator of whether or not a particular field is important enough to appear on the map. If the calculation includes the relative density of publications where there is a recurrence of some term or word, then we can find the effect of clustering and determine the proximity of related knowledge elements. This closeness is measured by the recurrence frequency of the term or word. The closer the subject, the higher the word frequency. The amount of knowledge growth is based on the number of publications and patents produced in a certain period. This way we can monitor the dynamics of research activities in different disciplines, subject areas, access changes that affect the public domain (patents and publications). The same data can be used to map knowledge (Tupan, 2016).

From the results of the scopus database search, research related to the *sandwich generation* found one (1) oldest article, namely the article by Miller (1981), with an article entitled "The 'sandwich' generation: Adult children of the aging". Meanwhile, there are 3 recent articles (Fu et al., 2023; Lei et al., 2023; Patrick et al., 2023). Interestingly, none of the articles are from Indonesia. This means that research related

to *sandwich generation* has not received enough attention from researchers in Indonesia. This makes this research very important and will be an additional reference from Indonesia as the fourth most populous country in the world. However, as an initial reference, there are four (4) articles from Indonesia's neighboring country, Malaysia that specifically discuss *sandwich generation* (Noor et al., 2020; Aazami et al., 2018; Ahmad et al., 2016; Norzareen and Nobaya, 2010).

Bibliometric Review Results

Figure1.

Number of articles per year

Documents by year

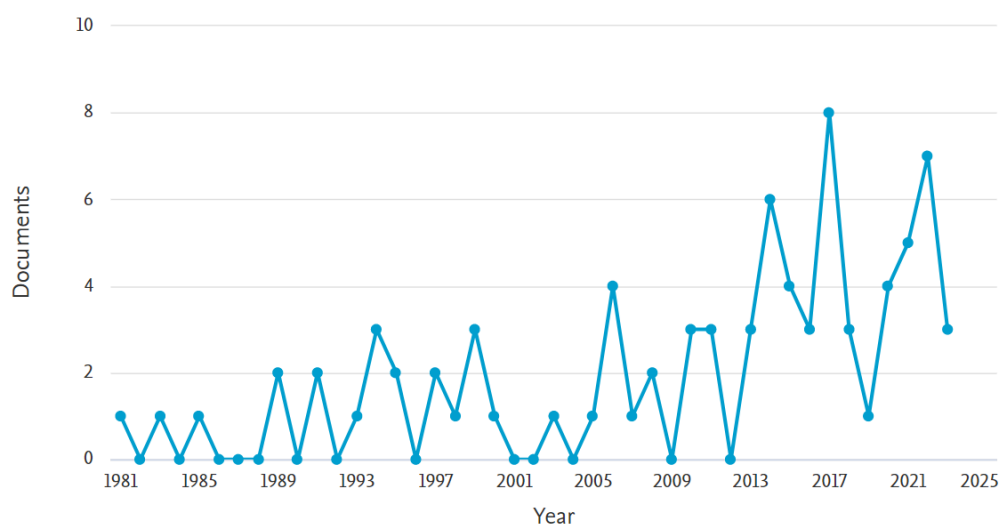


Figure 2.

Number of articles by author

Documents by author

Compare the document counts for up to 15 authors.

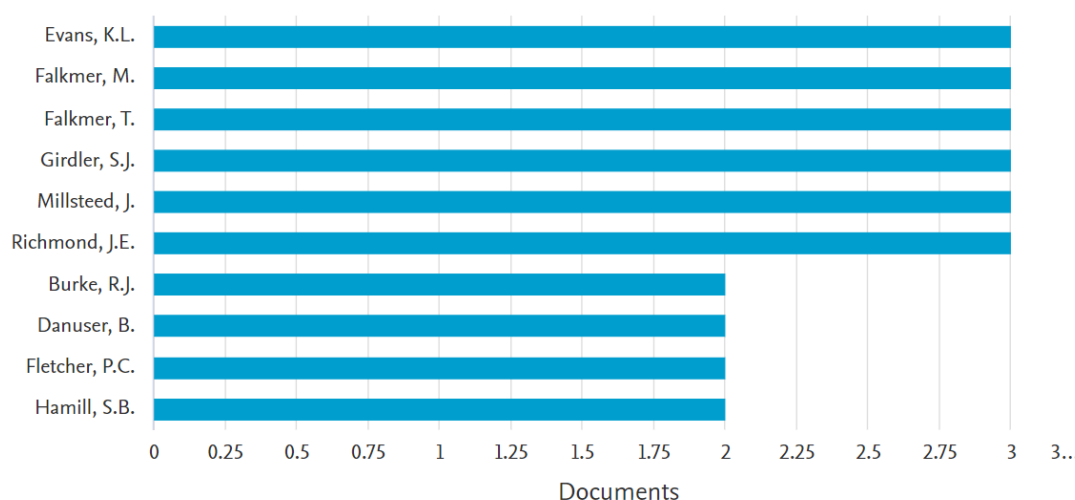


Figure 3.

Number of articles based on university affiliation

Documents by affiliation

Compare the document counts for up to 15 affiliations.

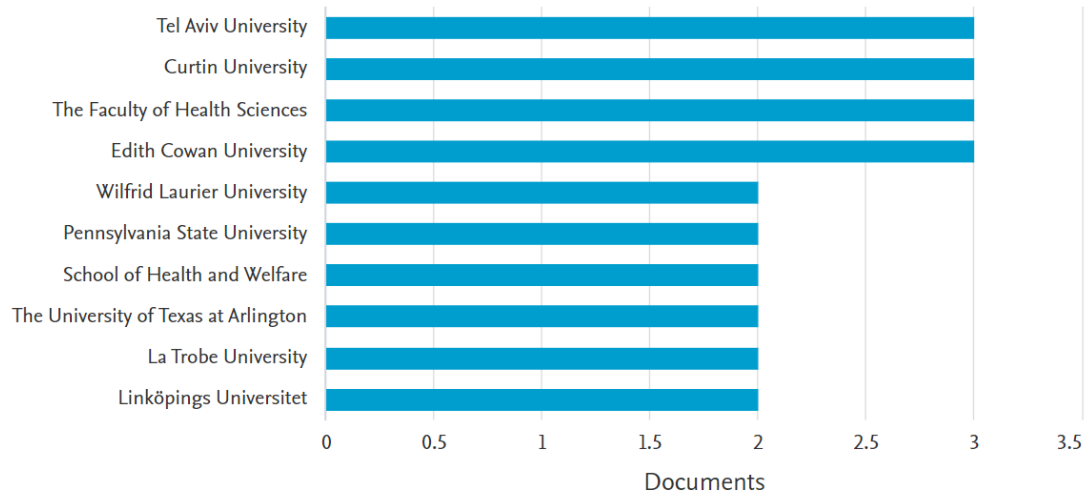


Figure 4.

Number of articles by author country

Documents by country or territory

Compare the document counts for up to 15 countries/territories.

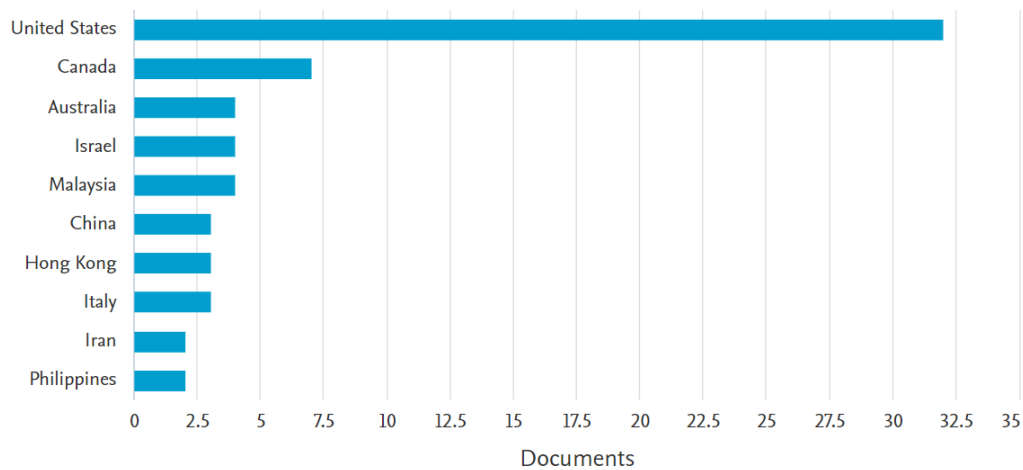
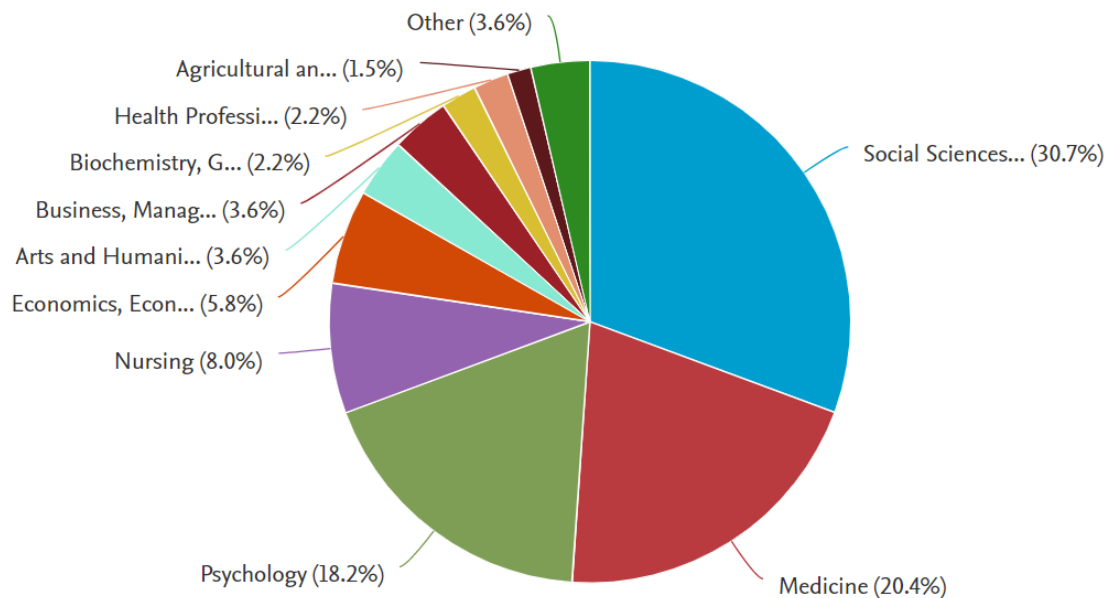


Figure 5.

Number of articles based on Research Subjects

Documents by subject area



Co-word Based Mapping

From the search results through the Scopus database, 82 documents related to *sandwich generation for the period 1981-2023* were obtained, then exported to CSV format, inputted and analyzed with VOSViewer analysis, the following results were obtained.

Co-Word Map Network Visualization

The results of the *network* visualization of *co-word* maps related to sandwich generation are divided into 3 clusters as shown in Figure 6 below.

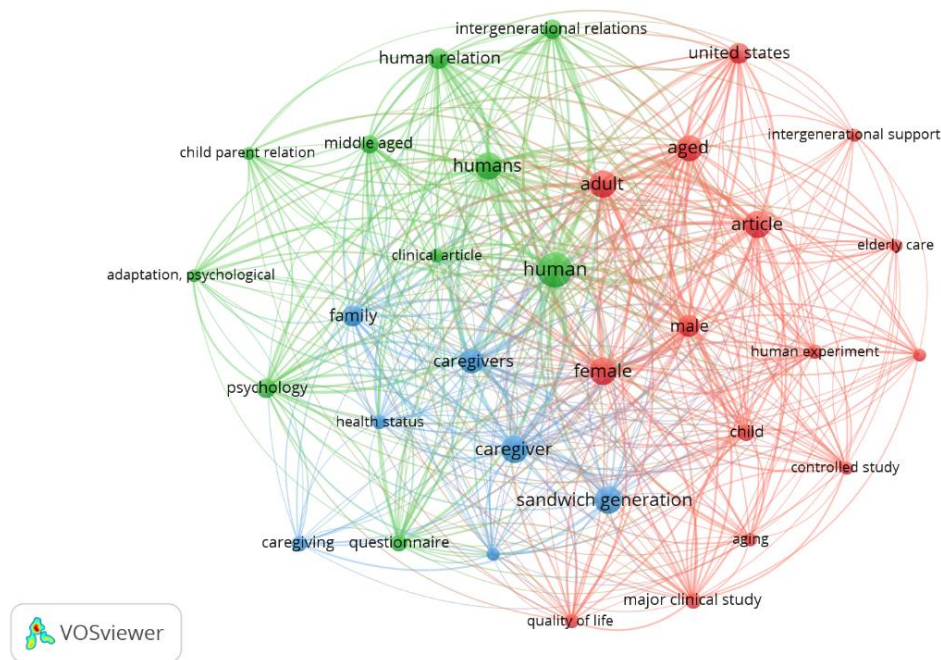
Cluster 1: Red color consists of 15 topics, namely: *adult, aged, aging, article, child, controlled study, demography, elderly care, female, human experiment, intergenerational support, major clinical study, male, quality of life, united states*.

Cluster 2: Green color consists of 10 topics, namely: *adaptation, physiological, child parent relations, clinical article, human, human relations, human, intergenerational relations, middle aged, psychology, questionnaire*

Cluster 3: Blue color consists of 7 topics, namely: *caregiver, caregivers, caregiving, employment, family, health status, sandwich generation*.

Figure 6.

Visualization of *Sandwich Generation network*

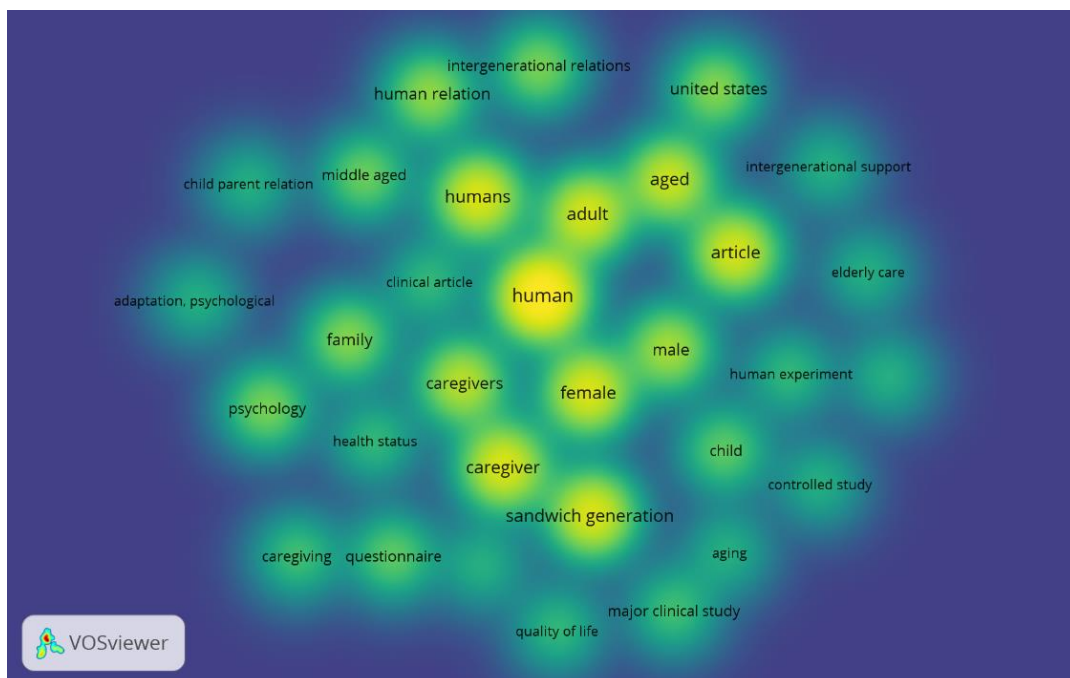


Co-Word Map Density Visualization

Through this visualization we can interpret which keywords are most widely used in a publication. Visualization of the *co-word density* map of research related to *sandwich generation* can be seen in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7.

Visualization of *Sandwich Generation density*



II. METHODS

The survey was conducted among 1,771 respondents. Based on the professional background, the respondents consisted of 1,555 civil servants and 216 Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK). Respondents were dominated by female respondents at 68 percent and male respondents at 32 percent.

Based on age group, respondents were dominated by employees aged 42-57 years as many as 885 people (50 percent), followed by employees aged 26-41 years as many as 754 people (42.6 percent) and the rest of other age groups, namely <26 years and ≥58 years. If categorized by generation group with the age of each generation, the percentage of survey respondents is presented in Figure 1 below:

Table 1.

Number of Respondents by Generation in Depok City Government

Generation Type	Number (Percentage)
Generation Alpha Born 2013 onwards, approximate current age 0-9 years old	0 people (0%)
Generation Z Born 1997-2012, approximate age now 10-25 years old	83 people (4.7%)
Millennial Generation Born in 1981-1986, approximate age now 26-41 years old	754 people (42.6%)
Generation X Born 1965-1980, approximate age now 42-57 years old	885 people (50%)
Baby Boomer Born 1946-1964, approximate age now 58-76 years old	49 people (2.8%)

Source: Research processing results

The Sandwich Generation survey questionnaire was distributed evenly to all Regional Apparatus in Depok City Government and the survey results showed that the respondents were predominantly from the Health Office as many as 445 people (25.1 percent) and the Education Office as many as 461 people (26 percent). The rest are spread across various Regional Apparatus. Based on educational background, respondents were dominated by S1 education as many as 1,089 people (61.5 percent), S2 education as many as 283 people (16 percent), D3 and equivalent education as many as 238 people (13.4 percent) and SMA and equivalent education as many as 154 people (8.7 percent).

The survey was conducted using the google form *tool* which consisted of 4 questions, including:

- 1) Respondents' Personal Data;
- 2) Educational Background;
- 3) Family Dependent Profile;
- 4) Number of Family Dependents (including Number of Children).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

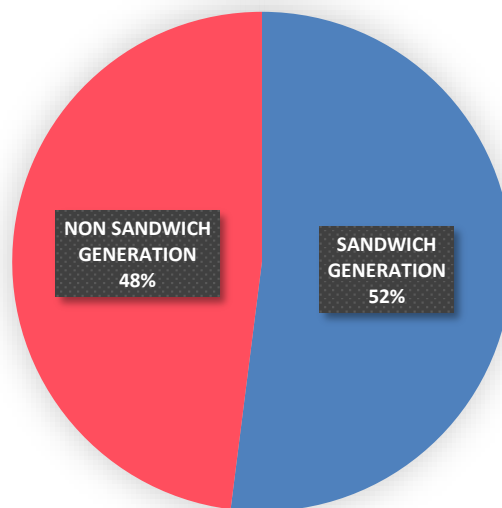
The *Sandwich Generation* survey results found that **52 percent** of Depok City Government employees are *sandwich generation* and the remaining **48 percent** are *non sandwich generation* as shown in Figure 1.

When examined further, the proportion of *sandwich* generation in Depok City Government consists of *Traditional Sandwich* as many as 379 people (21 percent), *Club Sandwich* Generation as many as 320 people (18 percent) and *Open Faced Sandwich* Generation as many as 222 people (13 percent) (Table 2).

Meanwhile, 48 percent of respondents who are *non-sandwich* generation, consisting of 700 people (40 percent) only have child dependents or no parents/elderly dependents and 150 people (8 percent) have no dependents either parents or children (Figure 2).

Figure 8.

Proportion of *Sandwich* Generation in Depok City Government Environment



Source: Research Processing Results

Table 2.

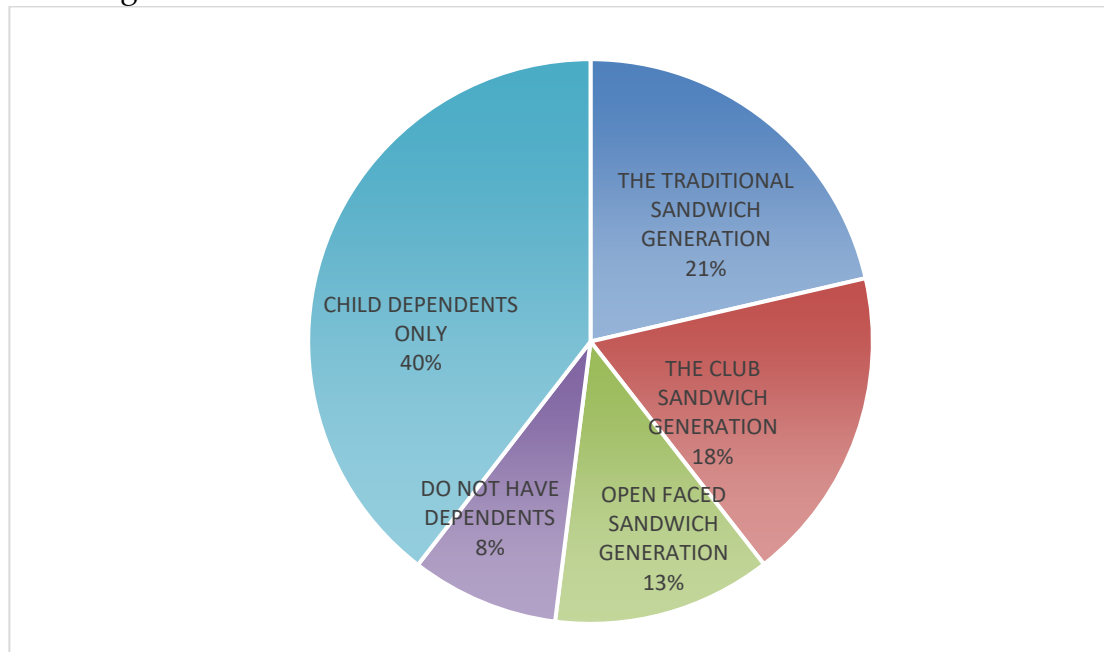
Percentage of *Sandwich* Generation Types in Depok City Government

No.	Types of <i>Sandwich</i> Generation	Number (percentage)
1	<i>Traditional Sandwich</i> Struggling with financial needs of parents and children	379 people (21%)
2	<i>Club Sandwich</i> Adults aged 30-60 years old who are squeezed by the financial needs of parents, children, and grandchildren	320 people (18%)
3	<i>Open Faced Sandwich</i> Adults involved in elderly care	222 people (13%)

Source: Research processing results

Figure 9.

Percentage of *Sandwich* Generation and *Non-Sandwich* Generation



Source: Research processing results

In further detail, the survey results show that although not belonging to the *sandwich* generation, 700 Depok City Government employees have children with varying numbers of dependents, namely 33.1 percent have 2 children; 22.6 percent have 1 child; 20.2 percent have 3 children; 4.1 percent have 4 children and the remaining 2.1 percent have >4 children (Figure 3).

Figure 10.

Distribution of *Non-Sandwich* Generation Based on Number of Dependents



Source: Research processing results

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This *sandwich* generation phenomenon gradually becomes a very *toxic* situation for anyone trapped in it, as well as for employees in the Depok City Government. Its high number has the potential to make some employees experience role conflicts, because they have to fulfill their needs, the needs of the generation below them and the needs of the generation above them. It is possible that this *sandwich* generation will experience changes in their social functioning due to various obligations that must be carried out simultaneously with the demands to meet the physical emotional and financial needs of their dependents. Some of the impacts of the *sandwich* generation include:

1) *Higher stress levels*

Those in the *sandwich* generation based on existing literature have the potential to experience depression or high stress. This happens because they are required to balance their roles in child care and also their parents. They not only think about themselves, but also the people around them, including their parents.

2) *Burnout or physical and mental exhaustion*

In order to make ends meet for themselves, their parents, and their children, the *sandwich* generation needs to work extra hard. The extra work causes physical and mental fatigue. As a result, they have no time to socialize and to relax because their time is spent working. This makes it difficult to vent emotions or just refreshing to relieve fatigue.

3) *Easy to feel worried*

The *sandwich* generation tends to worry continuously, both about the future of themselves, their parents and their children. Worries that the results of the work that have been given are not enough to pay for parents' health, or worries that the education provided to their children has not been maximized due to limited costs. These worries can cause excessive anxiety which, if ignored, will culminate in depression.

Seeing the impacts, the government has a role to break the chain of the *sandwich* generation, especially for the 52 percent of the *sandwich* generation within the Depok City Government. It is a reality that Indonesia does have cultural and structural problems in the economic chain where family and religion are unlikely to make us individual, so this generation becomes burden bearers and tends to put aside their own affairs.

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