

Models of Workplace Well-Being in Sandwich Generation Female Leaders: A Literature Review and Research Proposal

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Abstract. Female leaders from the sandwich generation face challenges not only in the workplace but also in their domestic roles. They have multiple roles simultaneously, such as being parents and children, each with different role demands. This study aimed to review the literature on wellbeing at work and evaluate the extent to which the literature on this topic covers the issue related to female leaders of the sandwich generation. The literature reviewed in this research was articles published in accredited and reputable journals, using quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as research within the organizational scope. The study found several variables that were positively related to wellbeing at work, including personality type, resilience, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, social support, coping strategies, organizational culture, and cognitive flexibility. The findings indicate that work-life balance is often positioned as a key factor directly influencing wellbeing. However, many studies also highlight its role as a mediator in the relationship between both internal and external predictors and wellbeing. Given the importance of work-life balance for female leaders in the sandwich generation, the researchers proposed a model that emphasizes factors receiving less attention in workplace well-being research but are critical for this group. Specifically, the researchers suggested that cognitive flexibility and creative adaptability are important internal factors, while perceived organizational support is a key external factor affecting the wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders. In this model, work-life balance mediates the influence of these factors on wellbeing.

Keywords: wellbeing; work-life balance; sandwich generation; female leader

Introduction

The role of women has evolved significantly. Women in the modern days are no longer focused on domestic work as many have entered the workforce and made a significant impact on the development of the economy, education and culture as well as other sectors (Bank Indonesia, 2022; Hartono, 2021; Indonesia.go.id, 2021; KEMENKOPMK, 2019; Nizomi, 2019). As highlighted by Destri Damayanti, the senior deputy governor of Bank Indonesia at the G20 event in Indonesia in 2022, women's

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growing presence in strategic roles positively influences global GDP when gender equality is managed effectively (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG), 2017; Indonesia.go.id, 2021; Kabeer & Natali, 2013). The growth of female labor force participation is also reflected in the rising number of women leaders across industries (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023), demonstrating women's capability to lead and make decisions at various levels. Women are often seen as natural leaders, capable of multitasking and addressing challenges with empathy and care (Alam et al., 2020; Indriani & Mulyana, 2021; Nerviadi & Nurwianti, 2024). In line with this, Indonesia's G20 Presidency promotes gender diversity and leadership in both public and private sectors to foster inclusive and sustainable growth (Bank Indonesia, 2022; Indonesia.go.id, 2021; KEMENKOPMK, 2019).

However, the increasing participation rate of women in the workforce, including in leadership positions, also brings unique consequences, particularly for those identified as part of the sandwich generation. The term "sandwich generation" was first introduced by Miller (1981) to describe individuals, primarily middle-aged women, who simultaneously bear the responsibility of childcare while also looking after aging parents (Miller, 1981). This dual caregiving role places women under greater psychosocial pressure, as they are required to balance their professional responsibilities with caregiving duties at home (Manor, 2021; Miller, 1981). In this context, leadership, once seen as a sign of empowerment, can become a stressor if not supported by adequate organizational support and the individual's adaptive capacity (Ilyas et al., 2022; Rajahonka & Villman, 2022). By now, the sandwich generation constitutes the largest workforce composition in Indonesia and most of them are women (Harmadi, 2022). Sandwich generation women are increasingly recognized for their contributions in various development sectors (Indonesia.go.id, 2021; Irianto, 2006). This can be seen from the increasing trend of sandwich generation women becoming leaders in organizations (Bank Indonesia, 2022; Indonesia.go.id, 2021; Nizomi, 2019; Putri, 2023).

Although the trend of female leaders is increasing, several challenges persist for women in the sandwich generation who hold leadership positions. Sandwich generation women face multiple challenges as organizational leaders, including patriarchal norms, traditional role expectations, leadership biases, and dual-role conflicts that impact workplace wellbeing (Fitriana & Cenni, 2021). For example, the Eastern cultures are typically patriarchal, viewing women as subordinates to men. Because of that, when making decisions related to social, political, economic, and other fields, women's voices are not heard and they cannot make and implement decisions (Fitriana & Cenni, 2021). Meanwhile, traditional role dichotomy is shown by views that men and women hold different roles. For instance, women are associated with household roles, and this has an impact on the secondary roles attached to women, making them increasingly marginalized (Budiati, 2010; Fitriana & Cenni, 2021). The role of women leaders in organizations is still debated. Some views perceive that women's leadership style is traditional and merely imitates that of men, so they are viewed as inauthentic and tend to be doubted (Fitriana & Cenni, 2021; Hartono, 2021; Reciniello, 2011). Women cannot let go of their dual roles when occupying leadership positions in an organization, but daily role dynamics have the potential to cause conflict if not managed well. Freeman stated that women are at 40% greater risk of experiencing psychological disorders than men and this is due to the high environmental demands

placed on them causing an increase in stress levels; for example the demand to balance the various roles they have to perform (Riley & Bowen, 2005).

On the other hand, the female leaders have been associated with increased employee productivity and work motivation as they are considered to be more collaborative, open and democratic than their male peers (Carli & Eagly, 2001; Irianto, 2006; Jonsdottir et al., 2020; Reciniello, 2011; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). However, the dynamics and multi-role responsibilities undertaken by sandwich generation female leaders can potentially lead to complex role conflicts and require the ability to think flexibly and creatively to move from one role to another effectively. If not, physical and mental fatigue can occur, resulting in stress, anxiety, high turnover rates, low work engagement, and burn out as well as other psychological problems (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Evans et al., 2016; Poulouse & Dhal, 2020; Riley & Bowen, 2005; Soomro et al., 2018; Steiner & Fletcher, 2017).

The wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders is important to discuss because lack of wellbeing in the workplace will lead to lower productivity, reduced work quality, increased absenteeism, and overall reduce their contribution to the organization (Czerw, 2019; International Labour Organization, 2021; Jackman et al., 2020; Kun et al., 2017; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). Wellbeing refers to an individual assessment regarding how happy and satisfied they are with their life (Joshnloo et al., 2012; Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022; Page, 2005). In this case, wellbeing is defined in the organizational context, meaning that wellbeing is how happy and satisfied a person is with their job, or with the organization in which they work (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Garg & Rastogi, 2009; Litchfield, 2021; Page, 2005). WHO published the WHO Index to measure workers' mental health based on their wellbeing at the workplace, which in the end can affect overall wellbeing and also the quality of life (World Health Organization, 2022). Wellbeing first became known due to Diener's work in 1984, which explored subjective wellbeing. From this perspective, wellbeing is considered subjective because the idea is for individuals to evaluate themselves, in general, to what extent they experience a sense of psychological wellbeing. As an operational definition, subjective wellbeing (SWB) is most often defined as one's perception of high positive affect, low negative affect, and high levels of satisfaction with their life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The concept of SWB has often been used interchangeably with happiness. Thus, maximizing one's well-being has been seen as maximizing one's happiness (Schueller & Seligman, 2010).

The American Psychological Association (APA) defined wellbeing as a condition or state where there are feelings of happiness, positive and satisfying social relationships, physical and mental health, low stress levels, and a good quality of life (American Psychology Association, 2018). Meanwhile, World Health Organization (2021) defined wellbeing as a condition or situation where a person is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, overcome stress in life, and make a positive contribution to society. Ryff & Keyes added that wellbeing allows one to have a positive life experience and more optimal psychological functions, build positive relationships with other people, and carry out meaningful activities (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Nizomi, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Despite the growing recognition of women's leadership and the increasing number of women from the sandwich generation taking on strategic roles in organizations, there remains a lack of focused

research on the wellbeing of this specific demographic group. Existing literature has largely addressed the challenges of female leadership or the caregiving burdens of the sandwich generation separately. However, few studies have explicitly examined how the dual pressures of professional leadership and caregiving responsibilities intersect and affect the workplace wellbeing of sandwich generation women. This creates a clear gap in understanding the mechanism and conditions that support or hinder their wellbeing in the context of complex, overlapping roles. Therefore, this literature review aimed to fill the gap by exploring the resources that influence the workplace well-being of female leaders identified as a part of the sandwich generation. Furthermore, the researchers also proposed a workplace wellbeing model for sandwich generation female leaders to complete the previous studies (Dewi, 2021; Khalil & Santoso, 2022; Kusumaningrum, 2018; Rahman & Wongkaren, 2023; Rari et al., 2021; Sudarji et al., 2022; Yanuar et al., 2021). The workplace wellbeing model for female leaders focuses on psychological aspects that align with the unique challenges of managing multiple roles, which are characteristic of the sandwich generation. While financial burdens have been the primary focus for the sandwich generation discourse (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, 2021), this model emphasizes psychological factors. Previous research has examined variables like happiness, self-compassion, work-life balance, and coping strategies. The research question brought forward was: What factors can influence the workplace wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders? This study highlighted the need to conduct a literature review regarding workplace wellbeing of female leaders who identified as a part of the sandwich generation.

Method

This study was a literature review, which is defined as information analysis and synthesis, focusing on findings and not just bibliographic citations, summarizing the substance of the literature, and drawing conclusions from the review conducted (Randolph, 2009). The literature review process in this research consisted of four steps: (1) formulation of the problem or phenomenon to be researched, (2) data search, (3) data evaluation, and (4) data analysis and interpretation (Randolph, 2009). The purpose of a literature review is to collect, review, and synthesize research that has been conducted by previous researchers (Prahasasgita & Lestari, 2023).

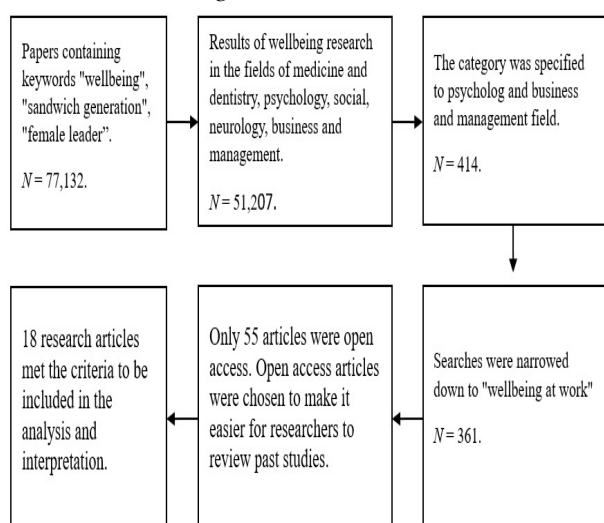
The phenomenon raised in this study was the workplace wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders. During the data search, the researchers used several search engines, including Google Scholar, Publish or Perish, Research Gate, and Science Direct. Researchers also looked for previous research data from well-known databases, e.g., ProQuest, and well-known publishers, e.g., Sage Publishing, Wiley, and Emerald Insight. Keywords used for the search were: “wellbeing”, “wellbeing in the workplace”, “sandwich generation”, “female leaders”, “work-life balance”.

Based on the search results, 77,132 papers appeared with keywords “wellbeing”, “sandwich generation”, and “female leader”. The findings consisted of research articles, encyclopedias, book chapters, conference abstracts, book reviews, case reports, and others. The researchers narrowed the type of literature to research articles, and the results went down to 51,207. These results consist

of wellbeing research in the fields of medicine and dentistry, psychology, social sciences, neurology, business, and management. Then the fields were further specified into psychology and business and management. The results went down to 414 articles. The researchers then narrowed down the theme to “wellbeing at work,” and 361 results came out, but only 55 articles were open access. Open access articles were chosen to allow the researchers full access to the studies. After the data selection and evaluation were carried out, there were 18 pieces of literature that met the criteria to be included in the analysis and interpretation.

Figure 1

Data Collection Stages



The inclusion criteria for the study were: (1) research articles discussing employee wellbeing in an organizational context, (2) research articles where respondents were women or female leaders, or articles comparing woman and male participants (3) articles discussing sandwich generation, (4) articles that raised issue about work-family conflict, work-family balance, and work-life balance, and (5) articles in open access and open archive journals. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were articles that discussed wellbeing in contexts outside the organization and non-empirical studies (e.g., systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses). Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive narrative method (Prahasasgita & Lestari, 2023) and presented thematically in regards to the factors that shape wellbeing in the workplace. See Table 1

Table 1

Summary of Literature Review

No.	Researchers	Title	Participants	Variable	Method	Result
1	(Evans et al., 2016)	Working Sandwich Generation Women Utilize Strategies within and between Roles to Achieve Role Balance	18 working women	Role-balance	Qualitative	Six strategies were used to maintain role balance, including maintaining health and wellbeing.
2	(Caesens et al., 2016)	Perceived organizational support and well-being: a weekly study	20 workers	Employee wellbeing, perceived organizational support, work engagement	Longitudinal	Perceived organizational support positively predicts weekly employee engagement and wellbeing.
3	(Aazami et al., 2018)	Assessment of Work-Family Conflict Among Women of the Sandwich Generation	90 Malaysian working women	Work-family conflict	Quantitative	Women in multigenerational caregiving had higher family interference with work, but not vice versa.
4	(Kusumaningrum, 2018)	The Sandwich Generation: the burden of nurturing and social support on working women	108 female Sandwich Generation workers	Perceived social support, parenting burden	Quantitative	Higher perceived social support is linked with lower caregiving burden.
5	(Wattoo et al., 2018)	Perceived organizational support and employee well-being: Testing the mediatory role of work-family facilitation and conflict	1340 employees	Employee wellbeing, POS, WFF, WFC	Quantitative	POS is positively related to WFF and negatively to WFC. WFF and WFC partially mediate POS-wellbeing.
6	(Brockmann et al., 2018)	Why Managerial Women are Less Happy Than Managerial Men	3174 managers, 27765 non-managers	Life satisfaction, wellbeing	Quantitative	Female managers have sharper decline in wellbeing due to demographic factors and leisure preference.
7	(Bataineh, 2019)	Impact of Work-Life Balance, Happiness at Work, on Employee Performance	289 employees	Work-life balance, happiness at work, performance	Quantitative	Happiness and work-life balance significantly impact employee performance.

Table 1 (Continued)

Summary of Literature Review

No.	Researchers	Title	Participants	Variable	Method	Result
8	(Kar et al., 2019)	Women's work-life balance: compensation is the key	44 female staff	Motivation, work-life balance, job pressure	Quantitative	Health time is not a good work-life balance outcome; stress still occurs due to job pressure.
9	(Olusa & Bolaji, 2020)	Job Demand and Turnover Intention: A Comparative Analysis of Male and Female Bank Employee's Resilience	154 men, 122 women	Resilience, job demand, turnover intention	Quantitative	Resilience reduces job demand and turnover intention; effects vary slightly by gender.
10	(Manor, 2021)	Being a Working Grandmother, Mother, and Daughter at the Same Time: A "Double Sandwich" in a Four-Generation Family	20 working women	Role maneuver in sandwich generation	Quantitative	Work is a protective factor that reduces caregiving duties.
11	(Rari et al., 2021)	Comparison of happiness levels between Sandwich Generation and the non-Sandwich Generation	158 total participants	Happiness	Mixed Method	No significant difference in happiness. Health and income affect happiness, not dependents or free time.
12	(Jang et al., 2021)	Double child and elder care responsibilities and emotional exhaustion of an older sandwiched generation: The mediating effect of self-care	183 sandwich generation	Self-care, caregiving responsibilities	Survey	Health of caregivers is significantly related to emotional exhaustion and self-care.
13	(Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022)	Examining the Relationship among Work-Leisure Conflict, Coping Self-Efficacy, Psychological Flexibility and Psychological Wellbeing	159 staff	WLC, coping strategies, psychological flexibility	Quantitative	WLC mediates PWB; coping self-efficacy moderates; psychological flexibility does not.

Table 1 (Continued)

Summary of Literature Review

No.	Researchers	Title	Participants	Variable	Method	Result
14	(Lubis, 2022)	Analysis of Women's Multiple Roles and Domestic Violence Female Factory Workers in Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency	10 female factory workers	Age, gender, work-life balance	Qualitative	Women work to meet rising economic needs and support families when husbands are unemployed.
15	(Bulog et al., 2022)	Women's overload during the pandemic: unpaid care work, financial well-being, and stress	869 women	Financial well-being, stress	Quantitative	Pandemic stressors: unpaid care, increased work, financial threats. Leisure time is vital.
16	(Okojie et al., 2023)	The Mediating Role of Social Support on the Relationship between Employee Resilience and Employee Engagement	260 nurses	Resilience, social support, engagement	Quantitative	Resilience affects engagement. Social support does not mediate the relationship.
17	(Górak-Sosnowska & Piwowar-Sulej, 2023)	The Well-being of Female Administrative Staff in Managerial Position in Polish Higher Education Institution	121 participants	Wellbeing	Mixed Method	Stress, low empowerment, invisibility, fewer resources, and anxiety reduce wellbeing.
18	(Olohunlana et al., 2023)	Women entrepreneurship and microfinance: implications on the mental well-being of informal traders in Lagos, Nigeria	100 women entrepreneurs	Mental wellbeing, psychological distress	Mixed Method	Recovery strategies and loan repayment significantly impact wellbeing.

Result

We will present some thematic factors that can influence well-being of working female sandwich generation based on the 18 research articles summarized in Table 1. Of the many predictors, researchers have synthesized them into several themes, including resilience, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, perceived social support, happiness, and other variables, such as coping strategies and psychological flexibility.

Resilience

Okojie et al. (2023) gathered evidence that resilience is one of the requirements for surviving an unpredictable workplace. Resilience among employees is critical to effective functioning in a “turbulent world of work.” Resilient employees have a greater ability to recover from workplace challenges and are more receptive to fundamental changes in the organization than employees who lack resilience. In addition, individuals with low resilience are more emotionally unstable and less flexible when facing challenges. Resilience helps employees deal with stress at work which can then affect their psychological wellbeing (Avey et al., 2023). A study by Gray and Jones (2018) also found that the workplace can be stressful, and these experiences cause anxiety that contributes to the inability to focus on tasks, especially when dealing with similar tasks or tasks that require processing, as they compete for space in cognitive decision making. Gray and Jones (2018) promoted resilience as one of the factors that form wellbeing in the workplace, especially for leaders who experience enormous pressure from above and below.

Research by Kuntz in 2016 (Okojie et al., 2023) suggested that resilience is an internal indicator of employees about how well they can deal with stress and how they can show perseverance in day-to-day work life. Employee resilience has been conceptualized as a dispositional variable responsible for the psychological mechanisms that empower employees to recover from challenging situations, traumatic events, and adversity. Employee resilience is also a protective factor in one’s response to changes in the workplace, which in turn helps them overcome and bounce back from setbacks that frequently occur in the workplace. Resilience is an important psychological capital for employees to have to achieve psychological wellbeing at work (Maulida & Shaleh, 2018; Olusa & Bolaji, 2020). Olusa & Bolaji’s research comparing the resilience of female and male workers showed that job demands and turnover intentions are significantly related. Job demands and turnover intentions decrease as resilience increases significantly in both sexes, but in a slightly different manner (Olusa & Bolaji, 2020).

Work-Life Balance

In studies on stress and health, issues related to work-life balance and psychological wellbeing always arise. Evans et al. (2016) found that women employed six strategies to balanced role demands, i.e., maintaining health and wellbeing, managing perfectionism, regulating time and energy, relinquishing certain responsibilities, nurturing social relationships, and giving back. Concerns regarding balanced role demands that can play a significant role in individual wellbeing began in the nineteenth century after sustained campaigns by workers in America and Europe against long working hours in factories, continuing into the early twentieth century when several trade unions campaigned to cap maximum working hours (Khateeb, 2021).

The potential for work-family conflict has been widely associated with negative consequences, e.g., poor physical health, psychological distress, anxiety, restlessness, declining wellbeing, and

dissatisfaction with marriage and life. Research related to this role conflict has been widely associated with work-life balance, among them is a study by (Aazami et al., 2018), which found that individuals caring for elderly parents and children simultaneously experience significantly higher levels of family-work interference. Women involved in multigenerational caregiving experience greater time deficits at work due to the significant amount of time spent fulfilling family obligations. In line with this, the term “spillover” emerged. Spillover is a phenomenon where work roles influence family roles and vice versa. It is further known that women experience spillover from family to work, while men experience it from work to family (Khateeb, 2021).

As women climb the career ladder, work and family needs also increase, and work-life balance becomes a major concern because it is one of the predictors of wellbeing in female workers (Kar et al., 2019). In fact, today, many organizations offer work-life balance programs to attract, retain, and motivate talent in the workplace (Agha et al., 2017; Khan & Agha, 2013). Bataineh (2019) stated that a person can live a happy, healthy and successful life and achieve psychological wellbeing if they have work-life balance and harmonization between work and non-work lives. In line with Bretneiker and Shah, who in 2018 argued that work-life balance must be a primary concern in achieving a good quality of life and wellbeing. In other words, work-life balance acts as an independent variable that can influence quality of life and wellbeing (Bataineh, 2019). Fisher et al. (2009) also stated that work-life balance could work as an independent variable that can influence satisfaction in one's job and overall life.

Organizational policies that support work-life balance are very useful for employees because they have been proven to boost productivity, which in turn can improve organizational performance (Bataineh, 2019; Bhende et al., 2020; Chandra, 2012; Dolai, 2015; Eikhof et al., 2007; Isaacs, 2016; Sirgy & Lee, 2017). In other words, work-life balance here acts as an intervening variable. This finding is in line with Ferguson et al. (2012), who stated that work-life balance could work as a mediator for job satisfaction, marriage satisfaction, and partner-family satisfaction.

Work-life balance among women is a significant predictor of their psychological wellbeing, as social norms often expect women to prioritize family responsibilities and other non-work roles. Consequently, when women hold managerial positions within organizations, a potential gap may arise between the expectations of managerial roles and the gender roles embedded in the local culture (Thrasher et al., 2022). Additionally, more studies have discussed women's issues related to work-life balance and only a few have focus on men (Khan & Agha, 2013). Women show higher scores in the job satisfaction aspect. This can then lead to differences in ways to achieve wellbeing in the workplace. Other studies have found that there is still the potential for gender-based discrimination in the workplace. This discrimination can take the form of differences in salary, treatment in terms of means and facilities, as well as inequality in opportunities for promotion (Brockmann et al., 2018; Son Hing et al., 2023).

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is one variable that has been proven to be a predictor for employee wellbeing. The hygiene hypothesis of crime: Examining the link between disgust-related diseases and crime incidence (Commer et al., 2019; Wattoo et al., 2018). In line with this finding, another finding showed that POS is also positively related to work engagement, which in turn can significantly improve employee psychological wellbeing at work (Caesens et al., 2016). Employees with high POS can feel that their needs are acknowledged by the organization in the form of pro-employee policies and this can further increase job satisfaction and contributions, which have a positive impact on the

organization (Galih & Mustofa, 2022).

POS may have a positive influence on employee work engagement because it increases employees' intrinsic interest in their tasks. POS will foster employees' intrinsic interest in their tasks for four main reasons (Caesens et al., 2016; Wattoo et al., 2018). First, POS fosters employees' confidence that their organization will provide them with material or emotional assistance when they need it. Second, POS gives a message to employees that good performance will be highly rewarded. Third, POS meets employees' socio-emotional needs (for example, the need for self-esteem). Fourth, POS can also increase employees' intrinsic interest in their tasks by fostering their self-efficacy. This intrinsic interest will then provide positive outcomes in the form of employee wellbeing.

Perceived Social Support

Kusumaningrum (2018) found a significant negative correlation between social support and the burden of caregiving in female sandwich generation workers. This means that the higher the perception of social support, the lower the burden of caregiving felt, and vice versa. To reduce the burden of caregiving in female workers, especially the sandwich generation, various sources of support are needed, namely family support, friend support, and support from other important parties. Social support for working women is an important factor in enhancing resilience, helping them deal with stress or workload. This social support also opens up space for discussion, expanding relationships, and mutual support. Okojie et al. (2023) findings showed that social support contributes significantly to increasing worker resilience which can ultimately increase self-confidence, improve work performance, enhance job welfare, and reduce turnover intentions.

Happiness

Rari et al. (2021) found that there is no difference in the level of happiness between the sandwich generation and the non-sandwich generation in Indonesia. They also found that health and income have a direct influence on happiness, while the number of dependents and free time do not. The study also showed that the presence of parents does not make the sandwich generation feel burdened. One of the interesting findings in this study is that in several other countries, being a sandwich generation is often associated with high levels of stress, but in this study, it was found that there was no difference in happiness between the sandwich generation and non-sandwich generation in the research sample (Rari et al., 2021).

In some cultures, such as Israel (Manor, 2021), there is an unspoken assumption among adult children in the family that when their parents become grandparents (especially in the case of women who become grandmothers), they will be willing to take on the role of grandparents and care for the children. The role of the "nurturing grandmother" is considered common in this culture. The expectation of grandmothers to accept this caregiving role is never in doubt, and the possibility of refusing it is almost non-existent, unless the grandmother works outside the home. Thus, work becomes the best "excuse" that allows women to avoid the responsibility of caring for grandchildren or other family members. This also happens because women in charge of providing care feel that they do not have time to take care of themselves, which can have an impact on stress and unhappiness in life.

Other Variables

Satisfaction with various aspects of life is important in achieving wellbeing. Research by Bulog et al. (2022) found that women are more vulnerable to stress and financial pressure, especially if there are

various demands of roles that must be carried out, both in the household and at work. This research also found that married and working women have higher stress levels than married women who do not work. Ultimately, this research suggests the importance of social support for working mothers, so that stress levels can be reduced, and wellbeing can be achieved. In line with this finding, (Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022) found that psychological flexibility is also needed to cope with stress that arises due to the demands of dual roles in women.

Discussion

Based on the explanation outlined in the results section, it is known that variables that are positively related to wellbeing in the workplace can be predictors, either as a standalone or collaboration with other variables, contributing to wellbeing. Existing studies have shown many factors predicting wellbeing in female workers. Studies on gender differences in wellbeing in the workplace have produced mixed findings.

Research regarding employee wellbeing in the workplace continues to emerge from time to time. Page (2005) workplace wellbeing model emphasizes aspects of individual comfort in the workplace and also the values held by employees. This value is divided into two categories, namely intrinsic and extrinsic values. Intrinsic values refer to how employees perceive their work and work environment, including the meaning of work, the quality of work, and a sense of achievement at work. Meanwhile, extrinsic values relate to factors that influence employees at work, e.g., the division of time into work and non-work domains, work environment, supervision, promotion opportunities, and also awards at work. Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) then added that job satisfaction is among the additional variables forming the workplace wellbeing model (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). Furthermore, the wellbeing at work model is also based on the wellbeing developed by Ryff and Keyes (Zizek et al., 2015). Among them is a model modified by Hsieh et al. (2019), the eudaimonic well-being in the workplace, which posits that workplace wellbeing is formed from positive organization, positive relations with co-workers, contribution to the organization, and fit and development.

Researchers propose to test a model of well-being in the workplace specifically for sandwich generation female leaders. It is hoped that this research will further contribute to completing the literature review regarding women's well-being in the workplace. Several variables align with the special characteristics of sandwich generation women. The proposed workplace wellbeing model to be tested consists of internal and external factors that form the workplace wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders. Internal factors are cognitive flexibility and creative adaptability, while external factors include the perceived organizational support. Work-life balance serves as a mediator in this research proposal. In previous research, Ferguson et al. (2012) placed work-life balance as a mediator to achieve job satisfaction, marriage satisfaction, and partner family satisfaction. Meanwhile, Greenhaus et al. (2003) placed work-life balance as an independent variable that can influence life satisfaction. Fisher et al. (2009) examined work-life balance as a predictor of life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Lockwood (2003) defined work-life balance as a tug-of-war condition between work life and family life, in which there is the potential for conflict situations (Agha et al., 2017; Khan & Agha, 2013).

Nowadays, due to the diversity of the workforce and emerging realities in global business, the focus has shifted to maintaining a good work-life balance because it can make employees more productive, happier, and engaged in their jobs. If employees see how organizations make it easier

to balance work and family, then organizations can gain a competitive advantage in recruitment. Employees who have access to family-responsive policies have a greater organizational commitment and much lower turnover intentions. Female leaders who have work-life balance can carry out all their roles harmoniously and dynamically, with minimal role conflict (Bataineh, 2019; Bhende et al., 2020; Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009; Sirgy & Lee, 2017; Soomro et al., 2018). It was further stated that work-life balance is not just “touch-and-go,” but also how every part of the role can have meaning so that each role supports each other (Babin et al., 2010; Best & Chinta, 2021; Chandra, 2012; Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015; Galih & Mustofa, 2022; Groysberg & Abrahams, 2014; Muda et al., 2021; Sirgy & Lee, 2017).

Internal Factor: Cognitive Flexibility

Cognitive flexibility refers to the human ability to adapt cognitive processing strategies to deal with new and unexpected environmental conditions (Canas et al., 2006). Cognitive flexibility has three basic components (Wu et al., 2021), namely: (1) awareness of choices and alternatives in any situation, (2) the desire to adapt to various circumstances, and (3) belief in one’s abilities. It can be the basis of mental health and wellbeing (Aslan & Turk, 2022; Canas et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2021). When sandwich generation female leaders carry out complex tasks or roles, they need to adjust their behavior according to the environmental conditions in which the task or role is being carried out. These conditions can continue to change as the demands of the task or role develop, and therefore, to be flexible, they need to restructure their knowledge to interpret new situations and the requirements of the new task or role effectively. On the one hand, cognitive flexibility relies heavily on attentional processes. Sandwich generation female employees need to divide their attention so they can detect situational changes and recognize the need for non-routine responses. A higher level of attentional control is required, where the individual assesses the new situation and plans the action to be taken. To be cognitively flexible, they also need to understand environmental conditions that can interfere with the task at hand (Canas et al., 2006).

On the other hand, cognitive flexibility also refers to how the sandwich generation represents their knowledge of a task and possible strategies to approach it. The sandwich generation with high cognitive flexibility can adapt to fluctuating environmental demands by reconfiguring their psychological resources, changing their viewpoints, and balancing competing desires, needs, and life domains. Those who have cognitive flexibility are expected to have better work-life balance and wellbeing. Kazu and Pullu (2023) found that women have better cognitive flexibility than men, allowing women to minimize conflict between roles and switch from one role to another without significant obstacles. In line with (Kazu & Pullu, 2023) suggested that cognitive flexibility acts as a protective factor from the negative impacts of multiple roles, e.g., stress and burnout. This can further help female leaders to achieve wellbeing, especially in the workplace (Commer et al., 2019; Garg & Rastogi, 2009; Page, 2005). Cognitive flexibility, alongside psychological flexibility, also serves as a coping method for stress that arises due to dual-role demands in women (Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022).

Internal Factor: Creative Adaptability

Apart from cognitive flexibility, effectiveness in carrying out several roles with different demands and problems also requires creative adaptability. Sandwich generation female leaders will certainly experience many changes in their lives and unexpected challenges as a result of the multiple roles they play (Khalil & Santoso, 2022; Manor, 2021; Steiner & Fletcher, 2017). Therefore, it is very important for them to have creativity in facing all demands so they can perform roles harmoniously, which allows

them to maintain psychological wellbeing.

Creative adaptability is defined as one's ability to generate new and effective cognitive-behavioral-emotional responses to stressful situations (Orkibi, 2021). It is often motivated by the need to overcome problems or deal with tensions and stress that arise in everyday life. Creativity requires novelty, meaning that the individual needs to break through the convention. Adaptation is necessary for creativity and appropriate reaction to sudden challenges. In short, this creative adjustment also requires someone to be skilled and able to learn from previous experience; therefore, they can modify solutions so that the same problem does not occur in the future (Babin et al., 2010; Orkibi, 2021).

Creative adaptability has three dimensions, namely behavioral creative adaptability (B.CA), cognitive creative adaptability (C.CA), and emotional creative adaptability (E.CA) (Orkibi, 2021). It is predicted to influence work-life balance and wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders. Sandwich generation female leaders often face complex situations where the competing demands of multiple roles can lead to heightened stress and tension (Muda et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). As an essential internal resource, creative adaptability helps them navigate these challenges and maintain their overall wellbeing. Creativity enables adaptation through internal transformation of the self (Cohen, 2012). This internal transformation requires sensitivity to the self, openness, and willingness to change current experiences, active and passive perceptual adaptation, and tolerance for uncertainty or ambiguity. Efforts to make sense of an uncertain situation can spark creative thinking and action because uncertainty usually requires a person to challenge old assumptions and try new things.

Organizational Factor: Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support is the extent to which employees perceive the organization supports and appreciates their contributions in the workplace, including the extent to which the organization cares and pays attention to their wellbeing (Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022; Perryer et al., 2010; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Perceived organizational support is reciprocal between the organization and employees. Perceived organizational support can make employees more productive, have higher commitment, and be more engaged in the organization. It is defined as employees' assessment of their organization, namely the extent to which their contributions are valued by the organization and the extent to which the rewards or rewards they receive for these contributions are appropriate (Perryer et al., 2010; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Furthermore, perceived organizational support is interpreted by employees as the extent to which the organization will help them face stressful situations.

Newman et al. (2011) stated that there are many ways that organizations can show their support for employees. Reward or support for employee contributions can appear in various forms, e.g., compensation, promotion, job security, autonomy, and delegation (Santoso & Mangundjaya, 2018).

Previous research showed that perceived organizational support has many benefits not only for employees but also for organizations. Perceived organizational support improves employee subjective well-being (Ilyas et al., 2022) and sandwich generation female leaders with high perceived organizational support are expected to report higher subjective wellbeing. Sandwich generation female leaders, when they receive organizational support, tend to be more involved in the workplace (Musenze et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2011; Omreore & Nwanzu, 2022). Perceived organizational support also contributes to a positive mood (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Sandwich generation female leaders who are involved in multiple roles certainly need a positive mood to perform their various roles optimally. A positive mood can further contribute positively to a person's health and

wellbeing (Moskowitz et al., 2021).

Figure 2

Research Proposal

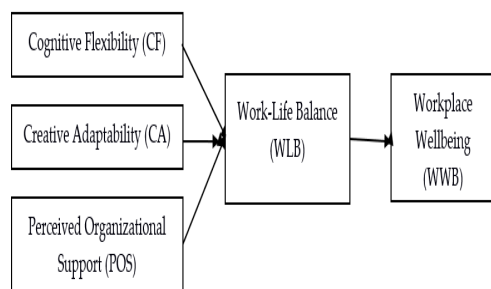


Figure 2 shows that the variables cognitive flexibility, creative adaptability, and perceived organizational support as independent variables are predicted to have a direct positive relationship with work-life balance and an indirect positive relationship with workplace wellbeing. Work-life balance acts as a mediating variable in this research proposal.

Conclusion

The interest in wellbeing research continues to grow due to its recognized importance in enhancing quality of life. In organizational settings, employee wellbeing is increasingly acknowledged for its positive impact on both individuals and organizations. Prior studies have linked variables like personality, resilience, work-life balance, perceived organizational support, social support, coping strategies and cognitive flexibility to workplace wellbeing. This study proposed a model tailored to the specific context of sandwich generation female leaders, aiming to extend previous research by focusing on their unique workplace wellbeing. Sandwich generation female leaders certainly have different characteristics from peers who are not a part of the sandwich generation. Aspects thought to contribute to the wellbeing of sandwich generation female leaders include cognitive flexibility, creative adaptability, and perceived organizational support. This study proposed work-life balance as a mediating variable in the model to be tested.

Recommendation

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. One primary limitation is the method used, namely, literature review. The current method can be further developed to ensure a more structured approach to data collection and analysis, thereby yielding more accurate and systematic results. Future studies are encouraged to explore the predictors of wellbeing in greater depth and to apply more rigorous methodologies, e.g., systematic literature reviews, meta-analyses, or scoping reviews, to enhance the robustness of findings. Additionally, further research focusing specifically on sandwich generation female workers is needed to gain deeper insights into the unique characteristics of this group, which may not be present in other populations. The wellbeing of the sandwich generation can also be compared with the non-sandwich generation. Furthermore, future

studies can investigate differences in wellbeing among female and male members of the sandwich generation.

The findings of this study have practical implications for organizational policy and human resources management. Organizations should consider developing a targeted support system, e.g., flexible work arrangements and mental health programs, to address the dual-role pressures experienced by female leaders who are a part of the sandwich generation. Furthermore, policy-makers and organizational leaders are encouraged to design inclusive policies that acknowledge the intersection of professional responsibilities and caregiving demands, thereby promoting workplace wellbeing and sustainable leadership among female organization members.

Declarations

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Author's Contribution

Each author has their own contribution to the manuscript writing process. The first author formulated the concept, method, and searched for all data and wrote the article. The second and third authors contributed as supervisors and helped formulate the concept and review the manuscript. The second author also served as a corresponding author.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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