

Uncovering the Complexities of Coping: A Qualitative Study on the Challenges Faced by Special Education Teachers in the Sandwich Generation



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ABSTRACT. This article explored the challenges encountered by Special Education (SPED) teachers who belong to the “sandwich generation,” a group of middle-aged adults responsible for caring for their elderly parents and children while maintaining professional obligations. The study employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research method to gather and analyze participant data. The study results reveal that SPED teachers experience physical and mental demands, excessive responsibilities, and obstacles that hinder their self-fulfillment, leading to harsh and challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, these individuals demonstrate spiritual and social resilience through adaptive coping mechanisms, including effective time management, prioritizing quality time with loved ones, and engaging in religious practices. This research provides valuable insights into the unique challenges that SPED teachers in the sandwich generation encounter and suggest strategies for supporting them in their personal and professional lives. These

findings are significant for policymakers, educators, and practitioners in special education, as they shed light on the need for targeted support systems that address the complex demands of this population.

1.0. Introduction

The Sandwich Generation, comprised of Generation X (1965-1980), is currently facing the burden of caring for their elderly parents and children. Compared to Generation X, the proportion of Baby Boomers financially supporting their adult children and elderly relatives has doubled (Parker & Patten, 2013). With increasing life expectancy, this phenomenon is not unique to a particular region but is a global problem (Ro, 2021). Young adulthood has undergone profound changes, with the preteen and twenties now being reclassified as “transitions to adulthood” or “emerging adulthood” (Bredehoft, 2021). Today’s young adults are a highly educated and diverse demographic, representing a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, with the Millennials being the largest living generation (Frey, 2018).

Despite the challenges, the Sandwich Generation must maintain a positive attitude and regularly take care of themselves to avoid becoming fatigued from stress (Brown-Worsham,

2022). Caring for elderly family members can take years, requiring an average of 20 hours a week and leading to additional financial and emotional stress (Scommegna, 2016). Juggling a job while caring for elderly parents, other family members, or young children can be challenging and impact a person’s job performance (Scommegna, 2016; Fay, 2013; Evans et al., 2019). Caring for elderly parents and children bring physical and emotional pressures that can be difficult to measure and describe. Women from the Sandwich Generation, working full-time and caring for their children and elderly parents, face a delicate balancing act (Evans et al., 2016). Understanding the Sandwich Generation’s unique situation is essential to address their needs.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Special Education (SPED) teachers play a crucial role in the education system as they work with students with various disabilities and learning difficulties. However, the demands of their job can be challenging and complex, especially for those who are part of the “sandwich generation.” This group of individuals is caught between caring for their elderly parents and supporting their children while maintaining their professional

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responsibilities (Kenton, 2022). Coping with these demands can be incredibly strenuous and challenging for SPED teachers, and as such, it is crucial to understand the complexities of their coping strategies. In the Philippines, where the family unit is highly valued, it is not uncommon for individuals to care for their elderly parents and their children. As such, the term "sandwich generation" has been used to describe those who must balance multiple responsibilities simultaneously. The work of special education teachers is already challenging, as highlighted by Sretenov (2017), who found that resources and funding for children with disabilities are inadequate. Additionally, Robinson et al. (2019) noted that special educators are at risk for burnout due to high levels of occupational stress and low pay. Despite these challenges, many special education teachers remain optimistic about their work.

The challenges SPED teachers face in the sandwich generation have received limited attention in the literature. While there is existing research on the challenges SPED teachers face (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019), more is needed to know about the unique challenges of those in the sandwich generation. Furthermore, there needs to be more research on the coping strategies of SPED teachers and those in the sandwich generation. As such, there is a need for research that uncovers the complexities of coping among SPED teachers in the sandwich generation. SPED teachers are a subset of the sandwich generation who face additional challenges due to the nature of their work.

The work of SPED teachers is physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding as they work to support students with disabilities to achieve their full potential (Emery & Vanderberg, 2010). In addition, their role as educators and caregivers for their children and aging parents adds to the complexity of their responsibilities (Parker & Patten, 2013). The challenges SPED teachers face in the sandwich generation are numerous and complex. The physical, emotional, and mental demands of their work and their responsibilities as caregivers to their children and aging parents can lead to high-stress levels and burnout (Kilgore et al., 2003; Allam et al., 2021). There is a need to understand the coping mechanisms SPED teachers use in the sandwich generation to manage their complex roles and responsibilities. The motivation behind this study was to acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter that could potentially aid in creating programs and support systems that

effectively tackle the intricate challenges faced by this particular population.

2.0. Methodology

Research Design. This research utilized a qualitative research design to investigate how Filipino SPED teachers manage the complex challenges of the sandwich generation. Data analysis was conducted through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which allows for a thorough examination of an individual's lived experiences and helps understand how individuals interpret specific situations and make sense of their personal and social environments. IPA is particularly appropriate for dealing with complexity, process, or novelty (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and emphasizes the importance of conducting meticulous research to fully explore the nuances of each instance before making more general statements. This methodology helps explore complex, novel, and emotionally sensitive themes (Larkin et al., 2021), making it suitable for investigating the phenomenon of being a Sandwich generation Filipino Special Education (SPED) teacher and their coping mechanisms. This collaborative approach involves interpretative work between the researcher and the participant, allowing for exploration of experiential meanings (Smith, 1996).

Participants. The study encompasses special education teachers who are currently employed in public or private schools in Butuan City, aged between 35-54 years old, and have a minimum of five years of teaching experience. These teachers are responsible for caring for their children and an elderly parent while working full-time at a special education school or institution.

Data Collection Procedure. After obtaining approval from the ethics committee, various methods were utilized to recruit participants, such as traditional means like advertisements, as well as online recruitment using snowball sampling. The research instruments, which included semi-structured questionnaires, underwent validation by experts in the field and were pilot-tested before administration to the study participants.

Seven female SPED teachers participated in this study and were subjected to in-depth individual interviews at their convenience in private. Each interview followed a predetermined format and was conducted and documented using Zoom's video conferencing app. Prior to the interview, each subject reviewed the Participant Information Sheet and provided verbal agreement to participate in the study. The interviews were

recorded and stored in an encrypted file on a password-protected computer. The length of the interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes, and participants were given the option to record the interview with or without their cameras. The Zoom application generated a transcript after each interview, which the researcher reviewed to rectify any misspelled or out-of-context terms. Following each of the seven semi-structured interviews, the participants were informed that the transcript would be emailed to them for accuracy checking. Participants were given one week to examine their information and advise via email of any necessary adjustments or omissions. After receiving participant approval for the accuracy of all transcripts, the researcher assigned a pseudonym to each participant to maintain privacy and identified any identifying information. Each transcript was then coded line by line with a phrase that accurately describes the meaning of the text, following which redundancy in each segment and sentence was analyzed (Alase, 2017).

Mode of Data Analysis. The method of analysis employed in this study involved manual transcription of transcribed data to gain a deeper understanding of each case. While no definitive method for conducting Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) exists, the researcher followed recommendations from Smith and Osborn (2008). This involved identifying themes in the first case, connecting those themes, analyzing subsequent cases, writing up the findings, and drawing conclusions. To comprehend the complexities and meanings of the participants' responses, the researchers interacted with the transcripts in an interpretive manner, engaging with the text to capture the essence of each response and understand the participants' mental and social worlds. The findings were validated using the critical friend technique and participant feedback (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.0. Results and Discussion

The present study utilized an IPA analysis approach to explore the real-world experiences and challenges faced by SPED teachers in the Sandwich Generation. The findings revealed several themes that emerged from participants' narratives, including the incredibly strenuous and difficult nature of their experiences, the excessive responsibilities they must manage, the obstacles they face in achieving self-fulfillment, and the physical and mental demands of their role. Coping strategies were also explored, and

it was found that spiritual and social resilience, effective time management, spending time with loved ones, and engaging in religious activities were the most common strategies used by SPED teachers to address the challenges they faced.

Incredibly Strenuous and Difficult

Data analysis revealed an initially incredibly strenuous and difficult superordinate theme. This is an apt description of the difficulties faced by sandwich generation members. When asked to describe what it is like to be a member of the sandwich generation, respondents talked about caring for their parents and offspring simultaneously. Participants would talk about their experiences in exceptional education teaching, describing how it has affected their financial and mental health. Transcripts revealed participants' perspectives on their roles as primary caregivers and special education teachers. Participants also mentioned having difficulty juggling the stressors of their home and school lives without it negatively impacting their health, ability to fulfill their duties, and interest in the things they do best. Thus, this superordinate theme can be broken down into three subthemes. These included physical and mental demands, excessive responsibilities, and obstacles to overcome in self-fulfillment.

The first superordinate theme is incredibly strenuous and difficult. It sheds light on the primary study question, which was how educators in the field of special education of different generations view the world differently. In it, members of the so-called "sandwich generation" discuss their challenges in expressing their innermost thoughts and sentiments. Previous research in various nations has revealed that a teacher's severe workload, pressure to do the task quickly (Petalla, 2022), and many pupils with behavior problems in the classroom are the primary causes of stress. The profession of teaching is one of the most demanding and stressful in the world. Because of their pressure, educators are often expected to carry a heavy load. There are four primary sources of stress for educators: individual, interpersonal, group, and professional. Everyone deals with stress uniquely, so each teacher's stress level depends on how they handle it. There is a connection between how students are and the stress they experience in school. Educators typically see student-related stress as the most demanding source of pressure. That includes dealing with students who are violent, unruly, or have special needs (Kebbi, 2018).

Teamwork-related stress is also known as interpersonal or relational stress. Using this method, educators and guardians can exchange information. Negative interactions with family, coworkers, and the government contribute to this strain. It is well-known that teachers face the problem of role-related stress, also known as task-related stress. Tension can be brought on by evaluations and heavy workloads (mainly administrative ones) (Bowling & Kirkendall, 2012). One of the most challenging aspects of being a part of the sandwich generation, according to the participants in the study, is the feeling of being overwhelmed by the never-ending list of duties and demands. They described that it strained their emotions and resources to provide for their parents and their own.

Excessive Responsibilities

The participants' experiences caring for both their elderly parents and their own children taught them the importance of fulfilling this duty. Many of them saw it as a way to express gratitude for their parents' sacrifices, while others saw it as an opportunity to help out an aged-parents.

I am hands-on in taking care of my parents. I am also helpless. At the same time, whenever I am working, I also think of moments with my mother if she is okay that I will leave my child with her to look after them in time of feeding. I spend more time with my students rather than my kids. Whenever I have free time, we do things they like to do, such as riding a bike and running. I see to it that I am not just a mother but also a playmate. (Participant 4, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

I also accompany him (father) to the downtown city in Central near me, so when my father goes for a checkup, I will be absent from here (work in school) or I will take leave to accompany him on the run. We follow a schedule. As for the cost, of course the pocket is already there because they haven't finished their breakfast, snack, and dinner. (Participant 3, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

It's hard because first of all my parents are aging and my kids are still with me, it's hard not because you don't want it but because you want the responsibility. Since for an

aging parent, they already have their own maintenance, of course those are the needs that I have to provide. After work, I have to check what my child did in school of course because as a teacher I also have to check my child. (Participant 6, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

The participants all claimed parental responsibilities. According to the findings, this is their way of showing gratitude for their parents' sacrifices on their behalf. Most of the "sandwich generation" is responsible for the well-being of their immediate and extended families, including their aging parents, children, and partners (Horowitz, 2022). The idea that children have a responsibility to look after their parents is deeply ingrained and supported in Catholic teaching (McBride, 2006, as cited in Pew Research Center, 2020). It is a significant responsibility for Filipino families to take care of their elderly parents. Only some people working for the government or private companies are eligible for pensions. Aged individuals of minority communities typically rely on their offspring or other family members for support (Angel & Angel, 2006). In response, Badana and Andel (2018) noted that it has commonly understood that Filipino children will look after their parents as they age in place.

Obstacles to overcome on the path to self-fulfillment

Participants consistently characterized their time spent teaching students with special needs as emotionally and physically draining but ultimately gratifying. They are aware of the difficulties of teaching students with special needs, but they continue to pursue this career because they have a true calling to work with students with special needs. Participants reported feeling satisfied and content when their students made progress in their learning.

No matter how much physical or emotional discomfort it causes you, it's a given that the child has a predicament; they're unique, so you won't complain to the child about it. (Participant 4, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

You won't blame this child for being different because they are unique in their own way, and that's why I know you won't. You will have the ability to empathize with them despite the fact that they have

caused you a great deal of physical damage. (Participant 7, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

This means there's always a chance that the kids who showed up for class won't be able to keep up with the lesson, or that the kids you were counting on to show up would be absent even though the session is focused on them. When that's the case, it's all up to the individual's behavior. As a teacher, I know I'll have to chase after my students if I want to get through to them and teach them the material we've covered thus far. (Participant 3, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

The things that drive me to be a good teacher are passion and patience for my students. I also want to be able to assist the students' parents in this way since I find that fulfilling, and I want my career despite the challenges it presents. (Participant 1, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

If you want to be a teacher, you should be prepared to work with students with special needs because they are far more challenging and draining than other students." This is a difficult task but doing it will ultimately result in the sense of accomplishment. You must have a positive attitude about imparting your knowledge to others. (Participant 6, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

I only have a few students, but the obligation is significant; there are many things that need to be done, such as providing the students with educational materials and lessons that are at the appropriate level for them." You must also pay attention to them because you tend to be easily sidetracked by them. There is going to be complete anarchy in the classroom. When you teach, you must also demonstrate patience and understanding and always do your very best. Even though it can be challenging, I get a sense of satisfaction once I see them apply what they have learned from me in their lives. (Participant 3, personal

communication, November 10, 2021)

The people who took part said that their job as special educators pay their bills and gives them a sense of accomplishment, even though it is hard work. They chose this job because they felt like they belonged in it, and teaching kids with special needs gave them a sense of purpose. Participants said they are happy when their students learn and that helping their parents makes them feel good. Previous studies found that cooperation between teachers, parents, and students was the most important thing for teachers of students with special needs. The teachers and parents can help the students do well because they can better understand their needs (Adams et al., 2018).

Physically and Mentally Demanding

Health issues is a common challenge for those working in special education. Having to prioritize one's children, parents, and career creates a health problem. Responsibility as a member of the sandwich generation does not go away when one returns home from work or leaves the office. Although they have had various health issues, most are stressed out, physically fatigued, and exhausted from the numerous family responsibilities they have taken on.

I'm just eating to calm my nerves. The moment came when I became ill with dengue, and the day after I was admitted to the hospital, there was an event taking place at my son's school, which was also attended by my brother. I am confined, and both of my parents are keeping a close eye on me. (Participant 7, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

When I become sick, I have a really hard time. I frequently have a fever, and I get chills due to weariness; thus, the only thing I can do is take a full day of rest, drink medicine, and take vitamins in order to get stronger. (Participant 5, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

I can no longer find a balance between my responsibilities and caring for myself because, of course, there are many roles. However, despite the fact that we are in a stable financial

position, I am suffering from sleep deprivation. (Participant 4, personal communication, December 2021)

This is my first time becoming a mom. My exhaustion is a constant problem for me. My kid is still young, so I have to be available for him or her as he or she develops. Someone will watch over her while I'm in the office. One more way I save money is by breastfeeding my baby. I hope to breastfeed her as well, despite the challenges presented by my studies. I still had stuff to accomplish when I came home. It's challenging to live a healthy lifestyle, but I know that my kid and I will be better off for it. (Participant 3, personal communication, November 2021)

The participants ranked dealing with physical and mental illness as one of their most significant real-world challenges. The respondents identified this as the primary barrier to their practical completion of assigned tasks. Conway (2019) found that adult children caring for their elderly parents confront various challenges. However, many adult children are ill-equipped to shoulder these roles. Caregiving for an elderly parent, one's own family, and one's own needs all at once place tremendous pressure on a person's ability to cope with life, resulting in stress, exhaustion, and even physical illness. According to Parker (2015), women who juggle many roles (such as caring for elderly parents, raising children, and working full-time) face declining health due to stress and lack of sleep. Others suffer from depression, which hinders their ability to focus on domestic and personal responsibilities. The so-called "Sandwich Generation," who care for both elderly parents and young children, are often referred to as "caregivers." Caregivers often juggle multiple roles at once and may feel the effects of these responsibilities on their health (Vreugdenhil, 2014). Researchers selected special education teachers responsible for caring for their children and elderly parents.

Among the many challenges faced by special education teachers is the issue of stress. However, the nature of these struggles varies significantly from person to person. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, and muscular spasms are just a few health issues that can affect teachers under tremendous stress in the classroom. An external incident or occurrence can also cause harm to a person's health and psyche in the form of stress (Kebbi, 2018). Healthy and self-sufficient

members of the sandwich generation strike a balance between their many responsibilities. According to Evans et al. (2016), "sandwich generation" members can lead fulfilling lives by prioritizing their health and happiness and by "making time for yourself." Members of the study group engage in various activities designed to improve their physical, mental, and emotional well-being as part of the research.

Spiritual and Social Resilience

It became out that spiritual and social resilience was the second overarching theme. This explains how the participants are handling their problems. Having quality time with loved ones, keeping a routine, and participating in religious activities are all highlighted as priorities. It is how they have managed to meet all their requirements while juggling their responsibilities. The researcher found a triangular relationship between time management, family time, and religious engagement. The transcripts show that the participants make time for their loved ones and relax by planning. The vast majority pray to God for direction and assistance, while others seek solace and companionship within their own families, and yet others make preparations to avoid stress and illness.

When I feel that I am getting stressed, my husband is there to support me, and of course, I cannot forget to pray to ask for help from above. In that way, it helps me to cope up even though my husband is there, I still need guidance from the Creator. I was able to deal with my obstacles with the help of praying because I could not do all of this without Him. (Participant 4, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

On weekends, I prioritize spending time with my mother and child. Additionally, my friends often come over for dinner, giving me a chance to socialize. Together, we purchase necessary items for the household as well as any personal needs they may have. On Sundays, we attend mass to express our gratitude to God for all the blessings, support, and direction that our family has received. (Participant 1, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

This answers the second research question about how special education teachers from the

sandwich generation cope with their complex challenges. Participants reported relieving stress by spending time with loved ones and spiritual communities outside of work. No one can deny the importance of spirituality and faith in addressing people's emotional and spiritual needs, even in the secular and scientific information age, when people feel unsafe (Pargament, 2013). Religious observance has also increased, which is encouraging because studies have found that it helps people cope with pressure (Abu-Raiya & Pargament, 2015). The results of in-depth studies have shown that people worldwide have similar religious beliefs and practices. It has revered because it gives us power, stamina, and pain perception (Villani et al., 2019). According to research by Bjorlykhaug et al. (2021), a lack of social support might cause a person to experience emotional distress, anxiety, and social rejection. Participants in the survey reported feeling the most at ease and content while they were with their families. Having friends and family to lean on is an indicator of contentment. Some believe a robust social network makes people more resilient to stress and difficult situations (Suttie, 2020).

Time Management

Time management and schedule organization were identified as key means by which individuals dealt with stress, according to the study's participants and researcher. According to the findings, effective time management allows them to meet the demands of both their families and themselves.

Without prayer, time management, and the ability to organize your time effectively, you won't be able to get anything done. (Participant 5, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

Because of the difficulties caused by my health, time management is absolutely vital. My persistent concern is with matters such as who will look after my children in the event that something unforeseen occurs. (Participant 2, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

Because of unforeseen circumstances in my life, such as having a kid or my father having a stroke, effective time management and meticulous planning are absolute need for me. In school,

it is imperative that you grasp the needs of your students and that you teach to the best of your abilities whenever possible. Last but not least, my kids get my weekends on the weekends. (Participant 4, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

Time management is the primary subtheme of the second overarching theme. Many educators working with students with special needs report feeling overwhelmed by the demands of their jobs. That is why defining priorities and managing time can help alleviate stress (Kebbi, 2018; Petalla, 2022). Relationships, physical exercise, time management, and relaxation were identified as some of the coping techniques used by teachers (Lindqvist, 2019). The study's data allowed the researcher to determine each participant's unique coping strategy. The participant said that learning to manage their time better has been the single most helpful skill for helping them deal with the stresses of daily life. They said that if they could plan their work and activities better, they would feel less overwhelmed and stressed because they would know when they had reached their limits and could take a break.

Spending Time with Loved ones

The participants are having trouble reconciling their roles and needs, ultimately leading to them making personal sacrifices for the benefit of their families. Most participants make the most of their free time or rest days to strengthen their relationships with their families. At the same time, some take advantage of the opportunity to focus on themselves.

I make it a point to spend the weekends with my mother and my children. I shall go shopping for things that are necessary for them in our house. It ought to be at ease because those people are here with me. (Participant 3, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

If I reach the point where I can't take it any longer, I will talk to my mother because I also require comfort coming from my parents, as well as parental guidance. (Participant 2, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

Since I am always busy with work,

I try to make the most of the time I have off by spending it with my family. I make it a point to spend time with my loved ones whenever I have the opportunity. (Participant 5, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

One strategy participant used to deal with stress is spending time with their loved ones. Enjoying time with loved ones is what they look forward to the most in their free time. More research is needed into the claim made by Conway (2019) that the caregiver's familial relationships may impact their health. Sumra and Schillaci (2015) showed that women who juggled many roles and experienced stress in each were less content than those who juggled only the caring responsibilities. Furthermore, Hammer and Margaret (2008) observed that sandwich-generation caregivers might have a lower quality of life and "more than they can bear" (p. 261) as a result of the accumulation of various duties. This research also associated the burden of caring for an aging parent with feelings of burnout in the workplace (Conway, 2019).

Religious Life Engagements

According to the findings, most participants include spiritual meditation in their routines to manage the numerous sources of stress in their lives. The researcher revealed that participants in the sandwich generation who also work as special education teachers experience high levels of emotional stress. While spending time with loved ones is a great way to relax and de-stress, they also make time to pray and reflect on their spiritual lives.

If I start to feel overwhelmed, I know I can count on my husband to be there for support. I make it a point to pray every day so that I can have the strength to deal with whatever comes my way. I overcame my challenges through the power of prayer because I knew that I could not accomplish all of this apart from God. (Participant 6, personal communication, December 12, 2021)

On the weekends, I devote my time to my family, which includes my mother and my two young children. In our house, I shall provide for their needs by purchasing the necessary items. As a way of showing gratitude to God for all of his bountiful gifts and guiding

hand, we go to church every Sunday. (Participant 2, personal communication, November 10, 2021)

Participants in this study described experiencing more capability to handle stressful situations after praying. It reassures them that things will work out even though they cannot see the Creator and makes them feel confident that they can overcome any obstacle. It is not just the opinion; Ozcan et al. (2021) agree that faith may be a source of strength in trying circumstances. If a single Filipino parent has a lot of responsibilities, they can rely on their grandparents to watch their grandchildren for free (Scroope, 2017). Better sleep, emotional regulation, and self-compassion were reported by research participants in a study by Rusch et al. (2019). Moreover, they discovered that praying is a powerful tool for managing stress. Through prayer, one might gain strength and guidance from a higher power, enhancing spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being (Vann, 2015). Teachers with strong social networks can handle stress better (Clipa, 2017).

4.0 Conclusion

This research offers valuable insights into the challenges encountered by sandwich generation members engaged in special education and their coping mechanisms. Sandwich-generation individuals face a host of complex challenges in their daily lives. This is especially true for people who work in special education and have to deal with a complex set of problems. The findings suggest that participants experience an onerous and taxing responsibility. Despite the overwhelming and demanding responsibilities that sandwich generation SPED teachers face, the participants in this study were able to manage their expectations and find significance in their work.

5.0 Limitations of the Findings

The current study on SPED teachers who are also members of the sandwich generation has several limitations that must be considered when interpreting the findings. The sample size was small and limited to a specific group, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. The study only focused on SPED teachers who are also sandwich generation members. It is still being determined whether the findings can be applied to other groups of teachers or sandwich generation members.

6.0 Practical Application

The study did not examine the perspectives of the participants' family members or colleagues, which may have provided additional insight into the challenges faced by SPED teachers who are also members of the sandwich generation. A more comprehensive approach that includes the perspectives of all stakeholders could provide a better understanding of the challenges faced by this group. In conclusion, while the current study provides valuable insights into the experiences and coping strategies of special education teachers who are also sandwich generation members, the study's limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

7.0. Directions for Future Research

Future research should aim to address the limitations of the current study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this important topic. This can be done by employing different research designs or methodologies, including longitudinal studies, mixed-methods research, and case studies. Additionally, future studies could investigate the effectiveness of various interventions and support programs that may help SPED teachers who are also sandwich generation members cope with the challenges they face.

8.0 Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author has no competing interests to disclose.

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