

Resilience in the Sandwich Generation: Islamic Family Law Perspectives on Coping with Dual Responsibilities

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of the sandwich generation, individuals squeezed by the dual responsibilities of caring for their parents and raising their children simultaneously. This phenomenon creates significant multidimensional pressures, affecting their well-being and crucial life decisions. This research aims to analyze how the sandwich generation builds resilience and develops coping strategies amidst this double burden, particularly within the framework of Islamic family law values. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative data from in-depth interviews. The data is then analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of Family Resilience and Role Conflict. Data were collected from 50 individuals aged 25-50, both married and unmarried, who belong to the sandwich generation. The main findings indicate that the sandwich generation faces emotional, financial, and social challenges, which impact decisions such as delaying marriage (waithood). However, they are not passive; they actively build resilience through two main strategies: problem-focused coping (financial planning and division of responsibilities) and emotion-focused coping (strengthening spirituality and seeking social support). The central argument of this research is that resilience is a dynamic process that enables them to balance the demands of their dual roles, where Islamic values serve as a source of motivational strength and an ethical framework for navigating the dilemmas of responsibility.

[Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena generasi sandwich, yaitu individu yang terhimpit tanggung jawab ganda untuk merawat orang tua dan membesarkan anak sekaligus. Fenomena ini menimbulkan tekanan multidimensional yang signifikan, memengaruhi kesejahteraan dan keputusan hidup krusial. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana generasi sandwich membangun resiliensi dan mengembangkan strategi adaptasi di tengah beban ganda, khususnya dalam kerangka nilai hukum keluarga Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran (mixed methods) yang menggabungkan antara pendekatan kuantitatif melalui kuisioner dan pendekatan kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam. Kemudian dianalisis melalui kerangka teori Ketahanan Keluarga dan Konflik Peran. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara terhadap 50 orang yang termasuk generasi sandwich usia 25-50 tahun yang sudah menikah atau belum menikah. Hasil utama menunjukkan generasi sandwich menghadapi tantangan emosional, finansial, dan sosial, yang berdampak pada keputusan seperti penundaan pernikahan (waithood). Namun, mereka tidak pasif, melainkan secara aktif membangun ketahanan melalui dua strategi utama: problem-focused coping (perencanaan keuangan dan pembagian tanggung jawab) dan emotion-focused coping (penguatan

spiritualitas dan dukungan sosial). Argumentasi sentral penelitian ini adalah bahwa resiliensi merupakan proses dinamis yang memungkinkan mereka menyeimbangkan tuntutan peran ganda, di mana nilai-nilai Islam berfungsi sebagai sumber kekuatan motivasional dan kerangka etik dalam menghadapi dilema tanggung jawab.]

Keywords: Sandwich Generation, Family Resilience, Coping Strategies, Islamic Family Law

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the sandwich generation has emerged as a global demographic issue that has attracted considerable attention in the fields of sociology and family psychology. The term was first introduced in the United States by Dorothy A. Miller in 1981 through her article *The Sandwich Generation: Adult Children of the Aging*. She described the position of individuals who are “squeezed” both economically and emotionally between two generations—elderly parents and dependent children. Miller employed the metaphor of a sandwich, in which parents constitute the upper layer, spouses and children the lower layer, and the individual is placed in the middle as the filling. Accordingly, members of the sandwich generation bear simultaneous responsibilities for three layers: the upper generation (parents or parents-in-law), themselves and their spouses, and the lower generation (children or grandchildren) (Khalil & Santoso, 2022). This phenomenon is no longer confined to Western contexts. Demographic shifts, particularly the increase in life expectancy, have rendered it a transnational issue of growing relevance (Grundy & Henretta, 2006). Studies across various regions demonstrate a consistent pattern in which individuals of productive age must navigate the complexities of intergenerational relations (Fingerman et al., 2012). Moreover, this phenomenon has been experienced across multiple generations, from baby boomers to Generation Z (Frassinetti, 2024).

In Indonesia, similar challenges have manifested on a significant scale. A survey conducted by Litbang Kompas in 2022 revealed that approximately 67% of respondents of productive age identified themselves as part of the sandwich generation, equivalent to nearly 56 million people. A 2024 report by CNBC Indonesia further indicated that 48.7% of individuals aged 25–45 faced comparable circumstances, while DataIndonesia.id in 2023 reported that 46.3% of Generation Z—approximately 11.65 million people—were already burdened with dual financial responsibilities. In parallel, data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS) recorded an increase in the elderly dependency ratio to 17.08 in 2023, meaning that every 100 working-age individuals must support 17 elderly persons. These figures highlight the dual pressures faced by the productive-age population, who are required not only to provide for their nuclear families but also to assume caregiving responsibilities for aging parents or parents-in-law.

The substantial proportion of the sandwich generation in Indonesia underscores their pivotal role in sustaining family structures. This condition often recurs across generations, as parents who once endured similar circumstances tend to pass on the same burdens to their children. The situation is further exacerbated by insufficient future

preparedness, reflected in weak financial management, high consumption patterns, and relatively limited income (Frassinetti, 2024). These data emphasize the urgency of addressing this phenomenon, while also revealing that public discourse and socio-economic surveys have thus far only mapped its surface-level problems. In-depth studies on resilience and adaptive strategies, particularly those that integrate the values of Islamic family law embedded in society, remain scarce. This study seeks to fill that gap.

The primary challenge faced by the sandwich generation lies in their ability to set priorities among multiple responsibilities without neglecting any of them. They are often confronted with a difficult dilemma: whether to pursue a career to secure economic stability or to allocate more time and attention to their families. This dilemma becomes even more complex within the context of Indonesian Muslim society, where the principle of *birr al-walidayn* (devotion to parents) is a fundamental teaching that demands the proportional fulfillment of parental rights. The burden is further exacerbated by rising costs of living, education, and healthcare in an increasingly competitive labor market. Consequently, many individuals in this group experience chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and difficulties in achieving work–life balance. They are required to develop strong problem-solving skills in order to manage their dual roles effectively while striving to obtain decent employment that can sustain the needs of the entire family.

Such conditions inevitably generate emotional strain, psychological pressure, and role conflicts that threaten family harmony. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine how the sandwich generation builds resilience and develops effective adaptive strategies within their limitations. Specifically, the analysis focuses on values within Islamic family law, such as the principle of *birr al-walidayn* and the concept of *nafaqah* (financial support), which simultaneously function as ethical guidelines and potential sources of conflict in fulfilling dual responsibilities.

Previous studies have explored this phenomenon from various perspectives. For instance, Raihan Akbar Khalil and Meilanny Budiarti Santoso (2022) in *Share: Social Work Journal* highlighted the role conflicts experienced by the sandwich generation, which were found to disrupt individual social functioning, thereby recommending social work interventions to restore balance (Khalil & Santoso, 2022). Similarly, Alfian Muhammad (2022) in *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* examined the issue from the perspective of financial well-being, emphasizing the importance of financial literacy and comprehensive planning as primary solutions to withstand economic pressures (Muhammad, 2022).

Despite these valuable contributions, a significant gap remains in the literature. While socio-economic aspects of the sandwich generation have been widely discussed, integrative approaches that connect resilience and adaptive strategies with the framework of Islamic family law remain limited. This study seeks to fill this fundamental gap. Beyond descriptive accounts, it aims to critically analyze the resilience dynamics and adaptive processes of the sandwich generation by employing Islamic legal principles as its analytical framework. In doing so, this research aspires to uncover the essence of their struggles while formulating adaptive strategies that are both relevant to contemporary demands and aligned with religious values.

METHOD

This study is not confined to a specific geographical location but instead focuses on examining the social phenomenon of the sandwich generation across different regions of Indonesia. A mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design was employed. This design was selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding: quantitative survey data were used to map the scale and characteristics of the problem, which were then deepened

through qualitative interview data to capture participants' meanings, experiences, and adaptive strategies.

The study adopted two analytical approaches. Descriptive statistical analysis was applied to the survey data to illustrate the frequency and percentage of burdens, stress levels, and challenges experienced by respondents. Subsequently, thematic analysis was applied to the interview data to identify, interpret, and report the major themes that emerged from participants' narratives.

The findings were interpreted using two theoretical frameworks. First, Froma Walsh's Family Resilience Theory was applied to understand how families endure, adapt, and recover when faced with the pressures of dual roles. Second, Role Conflict Theory was utilized to analyze the tensions and competing responsibilities faced by the sandwich generation due to simultaneous demands from two directions of intergenerational obligations. This combined approach was deemed relevant to capture the internal dynamics of the sandwich generation, as they are not only confronted with role conflict but also engage in building resilience.

Data collection was carried out in two stages in line with the research design. The first stage was an exploratory quantitative survey conducted through online questionnaires, distributed using convenience sampling complemented by snowball sampling, which yielded 50 respondents. The purpose of this stage was to identify the general characteristics and scale of challenges faced by the sandwich generation. The second stage consisted of in-depth interviews with six participants selected purposively from the survey respondent pool. Selection was based on specific criteria to ensure diversity and depth of data, including: (1) variations in marital status (married and unmarried), (2) differences in occupational background, and (3) varying levels of financial dependency. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow informants to freely express their perspectives and experiences while keeping the discussion aligned with the research framework.

Additionally, this study incorporated a literature review that included scholarly journals, books, and relevant legal sources, such as the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law. This approach was considered essential to enrich the theoretical perspective while providing a juridical foundation for understanding the sandwich generation phenomenon within the Indonesian societal context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

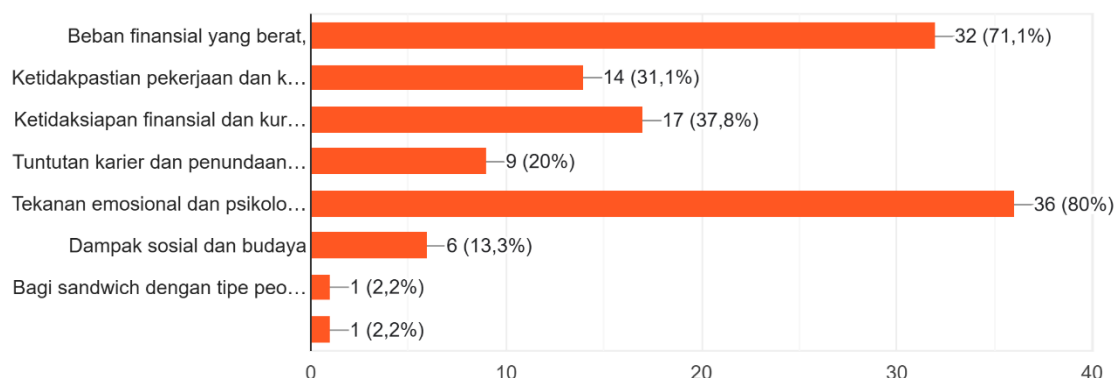
The Reality of Dual Roles: An Analysis of the Challenges Faced by the Sandwich Generation

The term "sandwich generation" refers to adults who occupy a "squeezed" position due to their dual roles, namely fulfilling needs beyond themselves—upward (toward their parents) and downward (toward their children, if married). In many cases, this responsibility even extends to siblings, whether younger or older (Kusumaningrum, 2018).

In Indonesia, the sandwich generation can be categorized into several types based on its characteristics. First, the *Traditional Sandwich Generation*, which consists of adults aged 40–50 who must provide for themselves while simultaneously supporting their children and elderly parents. Second, the *Club Sandwich Generation*, encompassing adults aged 30–60 whose responsibilities are more complex, covering three or more generations, including parents, children, grandchildren, and grandparents. Third, the *Open-Faced Sandwich Generation*, referring to individuals who either work in nursing homes or remain unmarried, including millennials and Generation Z. This group often serves as the backbone of the family, bearing the financial burden of parents or siblings despite not yet having dependents of their own (Muhammad, 2022).

Based on an online survey conducted via Google Forms, the study identified 50 respondents classified as members of the sandwich generation with diverse demographic characteristics. Respondents ranged from 25 to 50 years old, comprising both married and unmarried individuals. In terms of gender, women predominated (64.3%) compared to men (35.7%). Professionally, respondents represented various occupations, including private employees, civil servants, entrepreneurs, honorary teachers, and homemakers. This variation indicates that the sandwich generation phenomenon is not confined to a single social class but rather cuts across multiple layers of society.

In line with these conditions, members of the sandwich generation face a wide range of challenges in managing their dual roles.



Based on the data presented in the previous table, it is evident that the 50 respondents encounter diverse challenges and obstacles, which can be grouped into several dimensions. One of the most significant challenges lies in emotional, psychological, and financial pressures. The sandwich generation experiences multidimensional strain that not only depletes material resources but also demands a high level of mental resilience. The majority of respondents, amounting to 84.6%, reported occasionally experiencing stress as a direct consequence of the dual responsibilities they bear.

These pressures primarily stem from the dilemma of distributing limited resources—such as time, attention, and financial capacity—between parents and children. In many cases, these limitations create a persistent sense of guilt, as individuals perceive themselves as unable to meet the needs of both the older and younger generations in a balanced manner. This situation often results in profound mental fatigue, as illustrated by one informant during an in-depth interview, who expressed that the dual burden made it difficult to maintain emotional stability and generated overwhelming pressure in daily life.

“Emotionally, it is very heavy. At times, I feel guilty when I focus too much on my children and neglect caring for my parents, or vice versa. The exhaustion is not only physical but also mental, especially when I feel that I have no time for myself.” (INF 7, 2025).

This narrative highlights the psychological burden at the core of the sandwich generation phenomenon, namely persistent inner conflict and the erosion of personal space. Feelings of guilt emerge as a dominant emotion that drains energy, while the absence of time for oneself accelerates the onset of burnout or mental exhaustion. This condition is further aggravated by financial pressures, as individuals are expected to support the needs of multiple generations simultaneously with incomes that are often insufficient.

In line with this, Siti Nurjanah’s (2024) study demonstrates that the sandwich generation faces two major psychological tendencies. First, some experience mental health

disturbances and, within their household life, opt for a childfree lifestyle, arguing that the presence of children would only increase their burdens. Second, others believe that their sandwich condition strengthens their capacity to manage responsibilities, thereby fostering a tendency to desire more children as a form of social and economic strength for the family (Nurjanah et al., 2024).

Career development and economic instability constitute significant challenges for the sandwich generation. In addition to psychological pressure, they often face the dilemma of pursuing professional advancement while simultaneously fulfilling family obligations. For individuals who care for elderly parents at home, the decision to remain in full-time employment becomes increasingly difficult, thereby constraining household income. At the same time, they are also required to prepare retirement savings to secure their own future. Financial well-being plays a pivotal role in determining quality of life, as stable economic conditions profoundly affect both physical and mental health, particularly when confronted with unforeseen circumstances (Yeyeng & Izzah, 2023).

This tension between professional ambition and family responsibility is reflected in the interview findings. One respondent revealed the dilemma experienced, namely the difficulty of balancing the demands of work with the obligation to care for family members.

“On the one hand, I really want to focus on my job so that my career can progress. On the other hand, I also have responsibilities at home to take care of my parents and children. Moreover, at my current age, I should be making every effort to advance my career, because once I grow older it will certainly become more difficult.” (INF, 24, 2025).

This highlights the fundamental role conflict experienced by the sandwich generation, where crucial moments for career advancement often clash with unavoidable domestic responsibilities. For unmarried individuals, the form of pressure may differ, yet the intensity of the burden remains equally demanding. Financial obligations toward the extended family frequently compromise opportunities for both personal and professional development. This reality is reflected in the statement of one informant who revealed a similar experience of burden.

“As an unmarried member of the sandwich generation, I feel considerable career-related pressure because I have to financially support my parents and younger sibling. While my peers are able to focus on self-development or saving for the future, I am compelled to prioritize household needs first.” (INF 4, 2025).

This experience underscores the significant opportunity cost they face. Prioritizing family support often leaves them lagging behind their peers in terms of personal investment and future preparation. Beyond role conflict, another challenge that emerges is income instability, which exacerbates psychological pressures. One informant described this situation as follows:

“Sometimes my income fluctuates, making it difficult to prepare adequate financial support for my family. As a result, I have to be extremely careful in managing expenses to ensure that all needs are met without disrupting financial stability. This situation occasionally causes me stress, as I must always be prepared for unexpected expenses.” (INF 1, 2025).

This condition reflects the reality of economic uncertainty that places the sandwich generation in a state of constant financial vigilance, draining not only material resources but also mental energy. The burden of supporting two generations simultaneously presents a significant challenge, particularly for young individuals with unstable incomes and careers

that are not yet well established. In this context, financial literacy becomes a crucial instrument for managing emergency funds while also designing prudent investment strategies. Financial well-being is essentially influenced by several factors, including income level, debt burden, savings, accumulated wealth, and housing conditions. By strengthening financial literacy, individuals are better equipped to navigate the dynamics of economic uncertainty and ultimately achieve more sustainable financial well-being (Muhammad, 2022).

a. Social, Cultural, and Gender Pressures

The sandwich generation phenomenon is experienced by both men and women, though their roles are shaped differently by socially and culturally constructed gender norms. In practice, the burden tends to fall more heavily on women. Women are generally expected to provide intensive care and emotional support for their parents, whereas men are more often associated with material contributions (Frassinetti, 2024). This distinction reflects the gendered structures within society that shape perceptions and the distribution of responsibilities among family members.

b. Impact on Marriage Postponement (Waithood)

For unmarried respondents, the dual responsibility of being part of the sandwich generation has had a significant impact on the decision to postpone marriage. Survey data indicate that 65.7% of respondents delayed marriage due to the need to first achieve financial stability in order to support their families of origin before starting their own households. One informant explained:

“I tend to postpone marriage because I must first be the backbone of my family, especially as a man with significant responsibilities. I have to ensure that the needs of my elderly parents and younger siblings are met. Therefore, before marriage, I want to secure sufficient financial stability” (INF 34, 2025).

A similar sentiment was expressed by another informant, who emphasized the heavy responsibility of being the eldest child:

“I feel a considerable burden of responsibility, especially as the firstborn. I must assist my parents financially and also take care of my younger siblings. For me, marriage is not only about personal readiness but also about being fully prepared to build a new family responsibly” (INF 40, 2025).

Concerns of an emotional nature also surfaced, particularly regarding the well-being of parents should they marry and leave the household:

“At present, I still feel it is somewhat difficult to get married, because if I live with my husband, what will happen to my parents, especially since they are already elderly?” (INF 1, 2025).

These findings affirm that the decision to postpone marriage does not signify indifference but rather represents an adaptive strategy by the sandwich generation in navigating complex socio-economic realities. As highlighted by Izzati (2024), marriage postponement is driven by rational considerations related to economic instability, family obligations, and concerns over long-term financial risks (Izzati & Darmawan, 2024). Similar phenomena are observed in Western contexts. Fingerman et al. (2012) revealed that the challenge of balancing career aspirations with intergenerational obligations influences the life choices of middle-aged adults, while Glaser et al. (2018) found that in Europe, the increasing responsibility of caring for aging parents has become an important factor in family planning decisions.

Building Resilience, Existence, and Adaptive Strategies of the Sandwich Generation in Facing Dual Responsibilities

Family resilience is understood as a dynamic condition that reflects a family's persistence and strength in facing life challenges, encompassing physical-material as well as psychological, mental, and spiritual dimensions, thereby enabling them to live independently and harmoniously. Resilience signifies the family's capacity to manage available resources in order to achieve self-reliance and well-being (Jadidah, 2021). In the Indonesian context, resilience serves as the cornerstone for the sandwich generation's ability to endure the dual responsibility of supporting two generations simultaneously—parents and children.

The sandwich generation faces a profound dilemma: caring for aging parents on one hand, while also providing for dependent children on the other. This dual role generates significant psychological, social, and economic pressures. Survey results reveal that the majority of respondents (84.6%) reported stress due to this dual burden, highlighting mental health as a primary challenge (Yanuar et al., 2021). The complexity of this responsibility is heightened by the need to care for the family, sustain personal well-being, and maintain job and financial stability.

Walsh (2016) emphasizes that family resilience is grounded in three pillars: a shared belief system, organizational patterns, and effective communication processes (Siahaan, 2012). Within an Islamic perspective, the value of *birrul walidain* strengthens the family's belief system by providing spiritual motivation to care for one's parents. Family organization is reflected in the distribution of responsibilities among members and disciplined financial management. Meanwhile, open communication forms the foundation of family harmony amid financial and emotional strain. Yet, when demands exceed individual capacity, internal conflicts are likely to arise. Survey findings reinforce this, with 64.3% of respondents acknowledging that dual responsibilities affect household dynamics. Nevertheless, 68% reported actively building family support systems as an adaptive strategy to reinforce organizational patterns within the household.

Financial and psychological pressures also risk hindering open communication, despite its centrality to resilience. Sunarti (2018) highlights that family resilience encompasses four interrelated dimensions: physical-economic resilience, social resilience, psychological resilience, and family flexibility. The data from this study support this framework: 48.8% of respondents reported significant effects of dual burdens on household dynamics, 53.6% faced financial difficulties in meeting basic needs, 48.8% experienced social tension due to role conflicts, and 64.3% felt psychological strain affecting emotional stability.

Thus, family resilience in the sandwich generation is not merely about endurance but also about adaptive strategies to ensure the continuity of family functions amid evolving social, economic, and informational challenges.

To cope with the multifaceted challenges to their physical, social, and psychological resilience, members of the sandwich generation do not remain passive but actively develop adaptive strategies as mechanisms to endure the complexity of dual roles. Based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping theory, these strategies can be categorized into two main approaches.

The first is problem-focused coping, which emphasizes the resolution of practical issues, particularly financial matters. A large majority of respondents (86.7%) reported practicing more structured financial planning, such as drafting detailed household budgets, setting expenditure priorities, and allocating emergency funds. These measures are crucial

to prevent financial crises amid rising expenses. Such efforts are reinforced through improved financial literacy, including debt management, retirement planning, and long-term investments in property or the stock market (Dewi et al., 2024; Ardiyanto et al., 2024). Additionally, sharing responsibilities among siblings serves as a form of familial solidarity that helps ease both the economic and emotional burden of caring for aging parents and supporting younger siblings. Growing awareness of the importance of savings and investment underscores disciplined financial strategies as the foundation for financial independence and as a means of breaking the cycle of intergenerational dependency.

The second is emotion-focused coping, which concentrates on managing emotional stress. Respondents noted that strengthening spirituality, particularly through religious practices, provided an essential source of inner peace in facing economic pressures and role conflicts. Open communication within families also proved effective in preventing misunderstandings, promoting fairer distribution of responsibilities, and fostering emotional support that enhances solidarity among family members (INF 7, 2025). Furthermore, social support derived from digital platforms and peer communities plays a significant role. Social media offers a space to share experiences, financial management strategies, and personal stories of resilience, thereby cultivating solidarity and alleviating psychological burdens (INF 40, 2025). It also functions as a medium for entertainment, motivation, and emotional interaction that helps the sandwich generation remain empowered when dealing with everyday challenges.

Thus, the adaptive strategies of the sandwich generation extend beyond financial management to encompass emotional, spiritual, communicative, and social dimensions. Collectively, these mechanisms make substantial contributions to strengthening family resilience, enabling individuals to endure and sustain their roles optimally despite the strains of dual responsibilities.

Implications of Islamic Family Law on the Responsibilities of the Sandwich Generation

The sandwich generation in Indonesia faces an increasingly complex dilemma of dual responsibilities, particularly within the framework of *birr al-wālidayn* (dutifulness toward parents) and the obligations prescribed by Islamic family law. Research data indicate that the majority of respondents (85.7%) consider providing financial support to parents as a form of filial piety encouraged by religion, reflecting the strong influence of *birr al-wālidayn* in socio-religious practices within society.

Islamic law stipulates that children are obliged to provide for their parents under certain conditions. First, when the child has sufficient sustenance to meet their own needs. Second, when the parents lack wealth or other sources of income. According to Imam Shafi'i, this obligation applies if the parents are poor, unable to work, or experiencing physical or mental weakness. Prophetic hadith further provide a normative basis, permitting parents to take from their children's wealth in a reasonable manner that does not cause harm, emphasizing the principle of balance between parental needs and the child's capacity.

Within the Islamic legal tradition, differences among schools of thought enrich the discourse on who is entitled to receive financial support. Imam Malik limits the obligation to parents and children, while Imam Shafi'i extends it to all vertical family relationships. The Hanafi school emphasizes that *nafaqah* must be provided to all mahram relatives, whereas the Hanbali school asserts that support is obligatory for close family members entitled to inheritance. These variations demonstrate the flexibility of *ijtihad* in responding

to social dynamics, yet all agree that providing for one's parents is a child's duty as an expression of filial piety and respect.

Although the sandwich generation is often perceived as bearing socio-economic burdens, Islamic family law offers a reconceptualization. Dual responsibilities are not merely material obligations but also a means to attain virtue and spiritual reward. Islam acknowledges the challenges involved but provides a theological framework that transforms the individual's perspective from feeling burdened to being motivated. A correct understanding of *fiqh* regarding *birr al-wālidayn* allows the provision of financial support to parents to be not only a legal duty but also a manifestation of faith that brings blessings. This principle is explicitly affirmed in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 215, which places parents as primary recipients of charitable giving (*infāq*) while simultaneously reinforcing their position within the child's sphere of obligations.

"They ask you about what they should do. Say, 'Whatever wealth you give should be for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor and the traveler. And whatever good you do, Allah is All-Knowing.'"

Providing support for both parents is also one way to get the pleasure of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. This is in line with the command of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in the Qur'an in surah *An-Nisā'* verse 36:

"Worship Allah and do not associate Him with anything, do good to your parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, your close neighbours and distant neighbours, your companions, those who are on the way and your servants. Indeed, Allah does not like the haughty and the haughty."

However, Islamic jurisprudence is also realistic about the dilemmas that arise. When an individual is faced with limited resources between obligations to parents and responsibilities to the nuclear family (wife and children), the sharia does not leave him in confusion. This is where understanding priority *fiqh* (*fiqh al-aulawiyat*) becomes important to balance the two mandates, ensuring that each right is fulfilled fairly and proportionately according to its capacity. Basically providing for the wife and parents (who are no longer able to afford it) must go hand in hand, not choosing one and the other being abandoned, and this must be tried as hard as possible. (Indonesian Fiqh House, n.d.). However, if they have enough or even less income, then scholars are of the opinion that maintenance for wives and children should be prioritized before other maintenance. This is based on several religious texts, especially from the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as in the narration of Imam Muslim:

From Jabir that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: *"Start (sustenance) from you, if it is excessive, then the sustenance is for your experts, if it is excessive, then the next sustenance is for your relatives, if it is still in excess then it is for those among you, on your right and on your left"* (HR. Muslim)

In the context of Islamic family law, the obligation to provide for the nuclear family and take care of the parents is clearly regulated, as in Law No.1 of 1974 article 34 paragraph (1) states that: "Siami is obliged to protect his wife and provide everything necessary for domestic life according to his ability". Meanwhile, Article 46 paragraph (2) emphasizes that: "If the child has grown up, he is obliged to take care of his parents and family in a straight line upwards, if they need help". These two articles strengthen these obligations legally. However, the results of the study show that in practice, *the sandwich generation* often has difficulty in balancing these two obligations

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the sandwich generation in Indonesia faces complex, multidimensional pressures encompassing emotional, financial, and socio-cultural burdens, which directly influence critical life decisions, such as marriage. A prominent finding is how this generation actively cultivates resilience amidst these dual responsibilities. They do not remain passive but implement various adaptive strategies, ranging from problem-focused coping, such as meticulous financial planning and equitable distribution of responsibilities, to emotion-focused coping rooted in strengthened spirituality and the utilization of social support networks.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its integrated analysis, combining quantitative mapping of the scale of challenges with qualitative insights into resilience within the framework of Islamic family law. This approach addresses gaps in the literature that previously tended to be partial, whether from social or economic perspectives. Furthermore, the study reconceptualizes the dual role of the sandwich generation, portraying it not merely as a burden but as an avenue for virtuous action. Islamic values, such as *birr al-walidayn* (dutifulness toward parents) and the concept of *nafaqah* (provision), are framed not only as potential sources of conflict but also as pillars of spiritual motivation. The dilemmas encountered in practice can be navigated through the principle of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat* (jurisprudence of priorities), which provides an ethical guide for balancing responsibilities toward parents and the nuclear family proportionally.

Despite providing in-depth insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size constrains the generalizability of the findings to the entire sandwich generation population in Indonesia. This limitation simultaneously opens avenues for further research. Future studies are strongly recommended to employ larger samples and longitudinal designs to understand the long-term impacts of dual responsibilities. Additionally, comparative research examining adaptive strategies across different ethnic, social, and economic contexts would significantly enrich understanding. Findings from such follow-up studies are expected to inform the development of more effective policy interventions, such as targeted mental health support programs or financial literacy initiatives, specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by the sandwich generation.

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