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## **THE PROBLEMATICS OF RELIGIOSITY IN THE SANDWICH GENERATION: THE DYNAMICS OF FILIAL PIETY CONCEPT ON TWITTER AND TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the problems faced by the sandwich generation in practicing *birrul walidain* (devotion to parents), when religious values are confronted with complex social, economic, and psychological pressures. The sandwich generation refers to those who are simultaneously responsible for caring for elderly parents and other family members such as children or siblings, amidst financial and emotional constraints. Within this dynamic, the practice of filial devotion has undergone a shift in meaning, transforming from an act of worship into a form of compulsion. This research employs a qualitative approach with digital ethnography methods, and data were collected from Twitter and TikTok between 2019 and 2024. The findings reveal five main forms of problems: the shifting meaning of *birrul walidain*, financial pressure, physical and mental exhaustion, the dilemma between sincerity and compulsion, and the impact on personal life decisions. One of the root causes is the imbalance in relationships between parents and children, in which moral demands on children are very high but not accompanied by proportional parental responsibility. Several respondents voiced emotional wounds resulting from unfair or manipulative parenting patterns. On the other hand, there is a difference in moral standards: in Western contexts, filial piety is often limited to financial support, whereas in Islam, *birrul walidain* is comprehensive and lifelong, though it is frequently implemented without empathy for the child's reality. Respondents do not reject the teachings of *birrul walidain* but seek a healthier and fairer form of practice. In the discussion, the approach of *muhasabah* is offered as a form of spiritual reflection, enabling the sandwich generation to fulfill their religious duties without losing inner balance. The recommendations include recontextualizing the teachings of *birrul walidain*, educating for healthy family relationships, and providing more empathetic social and spiritual support.

**Keywords:** Sandwich Generation, *Birrul Walidain*, Family Morality, Digital thnography

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini mengkaji problematika yang dialami generasi sandwich dalam menjalankan *birrul walidain*, ketika nilai-nilai agama harus dihadapkan dengan tekanan*

*sosial, ekonomi, dan psikologis yang kompleks. Generasi sandwich adalah mereka yang berada dalam posisi merawat orang tua sekaligus anggota keluarga lain seperti anak atau saudara, di tengah keterbatasan finansial dan emosional. Dalam dinamika tersebut, praktik berbakti mengalami pergeseran makna, dari semangat ibadah menjadi bentuk keterpaksaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode etnografi digital, dan data dikumpulkan dari media sosial Twitter dan TikTok sepanjang tahun 2019–2024. Hasil temuan menunjukkan lima bentuk utama problematika, yakni pergeseran makna birrul walidain, tekanan finansial, kelelahan fisik dan mental, dilema antara keikhlasan dan keterpaksaan, serta dampak terhadap keputusan-keputusan hidup personal. Salah satu akar masalahnya adalah ketimpangan relasi antara orang tua dan anak, di mana tuntutan moral kepada anak sangat tinggi, namun tidak diimbangi dengan tanggung jawab orang tua yang setara. Beberapa responden menyuarakan luka batin akibat pola pengasuhan yang tidak adil atau manipulatif. Di sisi lain, terdapat perbedaan standar moral, dalam konteks Barat, berbakti cukup dengan dukungan finansial, sementara dalam Islam, birrul walidain bersifat menyeluruh dan seumur hidup, meski sering kali dilaksanakan tanpa empati terhadap realitas dari sang anak. Responden tidak menolak ajaran birrul walidain, tetapi mencari bentuk praktik yang lebih sehat dan berkeadilan. Dalam pembahasan, pendekatan muhasabah ditawarkan sebagai bentuk refleksi spiritual, agar generasi sandwich dapat menjalankan tanggung jawab agama tanpa kehilangan keseimbangan batin. Rekomendasi penelitian meliputi rekontekstualisasi ajaran birrul walidain, edukasi relasi keluarga sehat, serta penyediaan dukungan sosial dan spiritual yang lebih empatik.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Generasi Sandwich, Birrul Walidain, Moralitas Keluarga, Etnografi Digital*

## **INRRODUCTION**

Islamic religious education holds a central role in forming Muslim identity and behavior, particularly in shaping how religious values are understood, internalized, and applied in real life. In the contemporary digital age, religiosity is no longer confined to ritual performance within traditional settings but is increasingly manifested in virtual spaces, everyday decisions, and interpersonal relationships. This requires Islamic education to evolve from a solely doctrinal model to one that is reflective, contextual, and responsive to the socio-cultural realities of its adherents (Saleh, 2022).

A particularly compelling phenomenon within this context is the emergence of the sandwich generation, individuals, often in their 20s to 40s, who are simultaneously responsible for supporting both their aging parents and their younger dependents, such as children or siblings. The dual caregiving roles and economic burdens placed upon this generation have given rise to complex psychosocial dilemmas, especially in relation to the practice of birrul walidain, the Islamic obligation of filial piety. This term, originally grounded in affection, compassion, and reverence for one's parents, has become emotionally and practically challenging in a time of rising financial pressures and shifting family dynamics. The term "sandwich generation" was popularized by Dorothy Miller to

describe those who are “squeezed” between two layers of obligation—towards elderly parents and dependent younger generations (Noor & Isa, 2020).

Multiple studies support the notion that these pressures have significant spiritual and psychological consequences. Amalianita and Putri (2023) found that the prolonged role conflict in the sandwich generation can undermine their mental and emotional resilience. Hayati and Karyono (2024) also emphasized that economic burdens often reduce the individual’s capacity for religious practice, including the consistent implementation of *birrul walidain*. This is especially significant in the Indonesian context, where multigenerational households are increasingly common. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), about 34.71% of elderly individuals in 2021 lived with their married children and grandchildren, creating a living arrangement in which the sandwich generation must simultaneously navigate upward and downward caregiving responsibilities (Kamil, Ahmad, & Widyastuti, 2024).

Religiously, *birrul walidain* is considered a sacred duty. The Qur’an mentions honoring one’s parents immediately after the command to worship only Allah (QS Al-Isra: 23), underlining its central importance in Islamic ethics. However, the practical application of this commandment often collides with modern realities. Cultural and religious discourses frequently frame *birrul walidain* as an unconditional obligation, rarely acknowledging the economic limitations, emotional fatigue, or personal sacrifices faced by those who are expected to fulfill it. This gap between normative expectation and lived reality can lead to moral dissonance, guilt, and emotional burnout (Sudarji, Panggabean & Marta, 2022).

This moral burden is amplified by Asian cultural norms that place a strong emphasis on filial loyalty, often interpreting any limitation or boundary-setting as a form of disobedience or moral failure. In Islamic jurisprudence, however, the principle *la darar wa la dirar*, there should be no harm and no reciprocation of harm, provides the ethical foundation to question this absolutism. Yet, such balanced interpretations are rarely highlighted in family discourse or religious education (Jauhari, 2018).

In parallel, the rise of digital culture has transformed how young Muslims engage with religious values. With the increasing accessibility of smartphones and the popularity of social media platforms such as Twitter and TikTok, these individuals now find spaces to voice personal struggles, reframe religious meaning, and form online communities that either affirm or challenge their beliefs. Studies by Firnando (2023) and Lubis & Nasution (2023) note that digital platforms have become key in mediating religious learning and reflection, particularly among young adults. Azzahra et al. (2025) even identify these platforms as dynamic arenas for the reinterpretation of Islamic ethics, where religious expressions are negotiated in real-time through memes, threads, TikTok videos, and viral commentary.

Within these digital narratives, the sandwich generation often expresses emotional conflict: a desire to fulfill religious obligations on the one hand, and a need to maintain psychological and financial well-being on the other. Some online users find validation,

solidarity, and even theological reassurance through these platforms, while others experience increased pressure to conform to idealized standards of piety. This phenomenon invites deeper investigation into how modern Muslims reflect upon, reinterpret, and practice *birrul walidain* in a digitally-mediated social environment.

This study seeks to contribute to this discourse through three main innovations. First, it applies a digital ethnographic approach to examine how *birrul walidain* is discussed, problematized, and redefined on Twitter and TikTok by the sandwich generation. Second, it integrates reflective religious analysis, particularly drawing from concepts such as *muhasabah* (self-evaluation), to understand how individuals negotiate their spiritual identity amidst stress. Third, it focuses on the tension between normative religious obligations and modern constraints, thereby providing new insights for Islamic religious education to adapt more effectively to the psychological and socio-economic realities of young Muslim families today. Through this lens, the study aims to bridge the gap between theory and lived experience, contributing not only to the scholarship of contemporary Islamic thought but also to practical efforts in designing pastoral and educational frameworks that support the mental and spiritual resilience of the sandwich generation.

## **METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative approach using digital ethnography as the primary method to explore how the sandwich generation in Indonesia negotiates the concept and practice of *birrul walidain* (filial piety) within digital spaces. Digital ethnography enables in-depth observation of meaning-making processes, symbolic expressions, and community interactions that occur online. Rather than focusing solely on user demographics or statistical generalization, this approach prioritizes narrative depth and cultural insight into the lived religious experiences as shared by individuals in virtual spaces. The research site consists of two major social media platforms, Twitter and TikTok, chosen for their distinct yet complementary affordances. Twitter offers a discursive space dominated by text-based reflections and threads that often contain confessional or opinion-based content. TikTok, on the other hand, enables more emotionally expressive communication through audiovisual formats such as storytelling videos, voiceovers, or reaction clips. Both platforms were observed between January 2019 and December 2024, encompassing a wide range of publicly accessible content created by Muslim users within the sandwich generation category.

The participants targeted in this study were Muslim individuals aged 20–35 who have shared their lived experiences of simultaneously caring for aging parents and supporting younger family members, such as siblings or children. These individuals were identified through purposive sampling based on their active engagement in social media discussions related to family care, religious responsibility, and emotional or financial challenges. Due to the nature of digital ethnography, participants were not always formally recruited but were instead represented through their publicly available posts and interactions.

Primary data consisted of social media content—texts, images, videos, captions, and comment sections, collected through digital observation. The researcher documented these materials using screenshots and digital fieldnotes, focusing on recurring themes and language expressions. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted through direct messaging (DM) on the respective platforms with selected users who consented to participate further. These interviews provided more context and reflexivity regarding their motivations and emotional states. Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature on Islamic values, sandwich generation dynamics, and the psychology of religious practice.

For data analysis, this study employed an integrated approach combining thematic analysis and content analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify key narrative patterns, recurring emotional tones, and moral dilemmas across user posts. Content analysis focused on classifying types of religious expressions, such as confessions of guilt, assertions of autonomy, or reinterpretations of filial obligations. These two methods provided a layered understanding of how the sandwich generation negotiates the demands of *birrul walidain* under modern pressures. This methodological framework allowed the researcher not only to categorize online discourse but also to interpret the symbolic and emotional dimensions underlying users' religious expressions. By grounding the analysis in both religious theory and the lived digital realities of the sandwich generation, this study aims to offer a contextualized and empathetic perspective on the evolving practice of filial piety in contemporary Islamic societies.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Forms of Problematics in the Practice of *Birrul Walidain* among the Sandwich Generation**

This study reveals that the sandwich generation faces layered and interrelated complexities in upholding the value of *birrul walidain* (filial piety), a religious imperative in Islam. Rather than rejecting this obligation, most individuals in this demographic experience profound tensions in its daily application, particularly as they struggle to reconcile ideal religious values with the constraints of modern life. These complexities manifest in five primary forms of problematics, as observed across social media expressions and interview narratives.

The first and most dominant issue is financial pressure. Participants described the heavy burden of simultaneously supporting elderly parents and younger dependents, such as siblings or children, while managing their own basic needs. This dual financial responsibility often requires individuals to delay personal milestones, such as marriage, career progression, or homeownership, in order to prioritize family obligations. Many respondents reported chronic guilt and internalized failure when unable to fulfill every financial expectation, despite already sacrificing time, energy, and personal aspirations. These findings align with Sudarji et al. (2022), who emphasize that the convergence of economic hardship and moral expectations places the sandwich generation at risk of prolonged psychological stress. Social media narratives further illustrate how financial

struggles are often compounded by pressure to maintain family honor, making it emotionally difficult for individuals to assert personal boundaries.

The second problematic form is physical and mental exhaustion stemming from role overload. Participants frequently reported chronic fatigue due to the relentless demands of caregiving, employment, and household responsibilities. These findings echo Dorothy Miller's metaphor of the sandwich generation being "squeezed" between two layers of obligation. For many, *birrul walidain* becomes a spiritual responsibility carried out in the midst of sleep deprivation, emotional depletion, and limited self-care. As Berru and Putri (2023) have shown, sustained caregiving roles can lead to anxiety, burnout, and diminished mental well-being. In this context, religious duties are no longer solely a source of peace, but can become emotionally draining if not approached with realistic expectations.

The third issue involves a moral dilemma between sincerity and compulsion. While respondents acknowledged the religious importance of treating parents with respect, patience, and care, many also expressed confusion about the sincerity of their actions. Were they motivated by love, or by fear of being seen as ungrateful? This internal conflict reflects what Khomsinnudin et al. (2024) describe as the tension between classical Islamic teachings and the complexities of modern emotional life. The blurring of boundaries between spiritual devotion and social obligation often leads to cognitive dissonance and a sense of emotional inauthenticity.

The fourth form of problematics relates to the impact on personal life decisions. Several respondents shared how the demands of caring for parents led them to postpone marriage, reject romantic relationships, or decline professional opportunities that would require relocating or investing time outside the home. These decisions highlight how *birrul walidain*, while spiritually noble, also significantly influences one's psychosocial development. The struggle to balance personal and familial obligations often plays out publicly on platforms like TikTok and Twitter, where users seek support, share frustrations, and construct collective narratives of sacrifice and resilience in the face of rigid religious and cultural expectations.

Fifth, and perhaps most strikingly, the study finds a shift in the perceived meaning of filial piety, from an act of sincere love to a socially imposed burden. Though the Qur'an—particularly Surah Al-Isra (17:23), emphasizes *birrul walidain* as a form of compassion and excellence in faith, the realities expressed by participants reflect a significant detachment between ideal and lived experience. Many described feelings of emotional numbness or even resentment, despite fulfilling their duties outwardly. This suggests a growing need to reinterpret filial values in light of contemporary psychological and social challenges, ensuring that religious obligations do not erode individual mental health.

In conclusion, the sandwich generation's experience with *birrul walidain* reveals a transformation in both practice and perception. What was once a revered spiritual commitment is now often entangled with economic strain, emotional fatigue, and moral

confusion. These five interrelated forms of problematics underscore the urgent need for renewed, contextualized, and compassionate approaches to religious education and spiritual mentorship that allow Muslims to practice filial piety without compromising their well-being.

### **Factors Contributing to the Problematics of Birrul Walidain in the Sandwich Generation**

The difficulties experienced by the sandwich generation in fulfilling the obligation of birrul walidain do not stem from a lack of religious commitment or filial affection. Rather, they are shaped by a web of interrelated structural, cultural, and psychological factors that influence how this Islamic value is interpreted and practiced. Based on the data collected, five key contributing factors have been identified, each of which plays a significant role in exacerbating the tensions surrounding the practice of filial piety in contemporary Muslim life.

The first is financial inequality within family structures, which places adult children, especially those perceived as more stable, as the primary or sole providers for the entire household. In many cases, this financial dependency is not distributed fairly across siblings, and even parents who might still possess assets or modest income often do not contribute proportionally. This imbalance becomes more pronounced in multigenerational households, where one individual is expected to cover the needs of elderly parents, younger siblings, and children simultaneously. Under these conditions, birrul walidain becomes difficult to distinguish from survival obligations. As Sudarji et al. (2022) argue, prolonged economic strain reduces an individual's capacity to care for themselves, leading to a shift in birrul walidain from an act of sincerity into a perceived duty carried out under emotional and material duress.

The second factor involves unequal distribution of caregiving roles, particularly along gendered or economic lines. Many respondents reported that responsibilities related to financial support, physical caregiving, and emotional labor were disproportionately assigned to one child, often a daughter or the most "capable" sibling. This informal designation frequently occurs without open family discussions or agreed-upon boundaries, fostering silent resentment and emotional exhaustion. The resulting dynamic aligns with Berru and Putri's (2023) framework of role strain, which describes the internal conflict experienced by those trying to fulfill familial obligations while preserving their own mental health. Several participants shared that they were silently expected to assume caregiving roles simply because they lived closer to the parents, were unmarried, or had a more "flexible" job, criteria that unfairly overlooked the emotional toll of their situation.

Third, lack of emotional support and affirmation significantly intensifies the burden of caregiving. Despite their sacrifices, respondents frequently felt unacknowledged or even criticized by other family members. Many expressed a deep yearning for simple recognition of their efforts, which, when unmet, led to feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and failure. Instead of receiving empathy, they often encountered harsh judgments for setting

boundaries or voicing exhaustion. Hayati and Karyono (2024) similarly found that in high-stress caregiving environments, emotional neglect directly correlates with the deterioration of parent–child relationships and overall family cohesion. The absence of affirming support systems not only depletes the caregiver’s psychological energy but also undermines the relational fabric of the family unit.

The fourth contributing factor lies in rigid social and religious norms, which tend to frame *birrul walidain* as an absolute, uncompromising obligation. Within this cultural framework, setting boundaries, however necessary for mental health, is often stigmatized as disobedience, selfishness, or spiritual failure. Many participants shared their confusion and anxiety about how to define reasonable limits without violating Islamic principles. This dilemma reflects what Khomsinnudin et al. (2024) describe as the struggle of modern Muslims to reconcile inherited religious ideals with the complexities of contemporary life. The internalization of rigid norms, amplified by community expectations and social judgment, generates moral dissonance that is rarely acknowledged or addressed in mainstream religious discourse.

The fifth and final factor is limited access to empathetic spiritual guidance and reflective spaces. A recurring theme in participants’ narratives was the absence of trusted figures—mentors, religious teachers, or counselors, with whom they could process their spiritual struggles without fear of being judged. In the absence of such spaces, many turned to social media, not only to vent but to find validation and moral clarity. However, while online communities offer temporary solace, they often lack the theological depth or consistency needed to resolve complex religious questions. Within Islamic tradition, the legal maxim *la darar wa la dirar* (no harm and no reciprocation of harm) provides a principled basis for balancing religious obligations with personal limitations. Unfortunately, such nuanced principles are seldom discussed in accessible or compassionate ways, leaving individuals to navigate their dilemmas in isolation.

Taken together, these five factors underscore that the problematics of *birrul walidain* within the sandwich generation are not individual shortcomings, but the product of broader systemic imbalances. These include unjust family structures, societal pressures, insufficient emotional support, and a gap between normative religious teachings and real-life challenges. Addressing these factors requires a more contextual, dialogical, and empathetic framework one that does not dilute the spiritual significance of *birrul walidain*, but reinterprets it in a way that is emotionally sustainable and socially just for those who carry its heaviest burdens.

### **Solutions for the Practice of *Birrul Walidain* among the Sandwich Generation**

The findings of this study affirm that the sandwich generation does not reject *birrul walidain* as a foundational Islamic value. Instead, they struggle to implement it proportionally within the complexities of modern life, where financial instability, emotional fatigue, and shifting family dynamics are inescapable realities. Consequently, solutions must be developed that are not only rooted in religious teachings but also

responsive to contemporary contexts, so that *birrul walidain* remains a spiritually enriching practice rather than a source of psychological distress.

First, there is an urgent need to recontextualize the concept of filial piety so that it is no longer synonymous with total obedience or sacrificial self-erasure. This recontextualization draws support from the Qur’anic principle ‘*lā yukallifullāhu nafsan illā wus‘ahā*’ (God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity), reminding us that Islamic values must accommodate human limitations. Within this framework, decisions such as setting emotional or physical boundaries, arranging fair financial contributions among siblings, or choosing to live separately for mental health reasons should be regarded not as disobedience, but as responsible acts of self-preservation and long-term familial sustainability. By challenging the rigid equation between devotion and self-sacrifice, this perspective aims to dismantle cycles of guilt that often leave caregivers trapped in moral burnout.

Second, there is a pressing need to strengthen education around healthy family relationships, with particular emphasis on assertive communication, emotional literacy, and boundary-setting. Many respondents revealed that their understanding of *birrul walidain* was shaped by authoritarian parenting styles and cultural norms that conflated piety with submissiveness. To counter this, religious education curricula, as well as community programs, should promote models of relational ethics that are based on mutual compassion, accountability, and empathy. Teaching the sandwich generation how to articulate their needs respectfully while upholding their religious obligations empowers them to maintain family harmony without internalizing guilt or resentment. Reframing filial devotion as a conscious, loving choice, rather than a reactive obligation, restores the spiritual dimension of *birrul walidain* in its truest form.

Third, the creation of safe spaces for spiritual reflection and emotional processing is critical. Many participants shared that they lacked trusted figures or environments to help them work through their moral dilemmas without fear of judgment. As a result, they either suppressed their internal struggles or sought guidance through unverified online content. Religious institutions, counseling services, and faith-based digital platforms must therefore evolve into more empathetic, accessible ecosystems—spaces where caregivers can explore their emotional and spiritual questions honestly. By combining Islamic values with psychological insights, such platforms can offer balanced support that integrates theology with therapeutic care, allowing the sandwich generation to approach *birrul walidain* with clarity, peace, and intentionality.

Fourth, digital literacy regarding *birrul walidain* must be urgently promoted, especially to counteract polarizing discourses on social media. In digital spaces like Twitter and TikTok, users often encounter extreme narratives—either urging them to sever ties completely with their parents or demanding total, unquestioning submission. The sandwich generation must be equipped with the tools to critically evaluate such messages while anchoring themselves in authentic Islamic teachings. Religious literacy programs

that include modules on digital ethics and interpretation can guide users in discerning the nuances of online religious discourse, thereby helping them stay rooted in balanced perspectives while engaging with diverse opinions.

Fifth, collaboration among religious leaders, educators, counselors, and policymakers is essential to develop accessible, context-sensitive guidelines for practicing *birrul walidain* in today's society. These guidelines should address recurring challenges such as role division among siblings, reconciling caregiving duties with career demands, and navigating emotional boundaries without guilt. Concrete, well-communicated references grounded in both classical sources and contemporary lived realities—can serve as frameworks to reduce ambiguity and prevent emotional overload among Muslim caregivers. Moreover, these frameworks can bridge the gap between normative ideals and realistic practice, enabling families to foster a culture of supportive reciprocity rather than silent endurance.

In conclusion, the practice of *birrul walidain* must be reimagined not as a rigid doctrine but as a living moral commitment—one that evolves in response to generational challenges while staying anchored in compassion, justice, and spiritual wisdom. With sustained reflection, community support, and thoughtful reinterpretation, the sandwich generation can embody this value in a way that strengthens both their inner resilience and the bonds of love within their families.

## **COCLUSION**

This study has comprehensively explored the problematics surrounding the practice of *birrul walidain* among members of the Muslim sandwich generation who are active users of Twitter and TikTok. Drawing on digital ethnographic data and thematic analysis, several core conclusions can be identified. First, individuals within the sandwich generation face a multidimensional burden that spans financial, physical, emotional, and social domains. Their dual responsibility, supporting elderly parents while simultaneously providing for children or younger siblings, often results in prolonged stress, interrupted life trajectories, and a sense of personal stagnation. This burden is further aggravated by systemic issues such as unequal role distribution among siblings, the lack of emotional validation, and the persistent expectation to prioritize familial duty above personal well-being.

Second, there has been a discernible shift in how *birrul walidain* is understood and practiced. What was once seen as a sincere and compassionate expression of devotion has, for many, evolved into a rigid obligation accompanied by guilt and inner conflict. This transformation generates psychological, moral, and spiritual dilemmas, especially as adult children struggle to reconcile their personal limitations with the weight of religious and cultural expectations. Third, social media platforms, particularly Twitter and TikTok, play a significant role in shaping contemporary interpretations of *birrul walidain*. These digital spaces serve not only as outlets for emotional expression but also as arenas for negotiating values, exchanging support, and seeking validation. The findings show that

many individuals use these platforms to articulate their struggles, challenge normative assumptions, and search for a more contextual and humane understanding of filial duty.

Fourth, five key factors were identified as shaping the problematics of *birrul walidain* in the sandwich generation: (1) financial inequality and burden, (2) unequal caregiving roles within the family, (3) the lack of emotional support and acknowledgment, (4) the pressure of rigid social and religious norms, and (5) limited access to empathetic and practical spiritual guidance. These interrelated factors reflect that the difficulties are not rooted in individual failings, but rather in structural, relational, and cultural challenges. Fifth, the study emphasizes the need for constructive and holistic solutions. These include recontextualizing *birrul walidain* in a way that aligns with both Islamic values and contemporary realities, promoting healthy and equitable family relationships through education and communication, developing safe spiritual spaces for reflection and emotional processing, and improving digital and religious literacy to help individuals navigate conflicting narratives. These interventions are essential to ensure that filial piety remains a meaningful and empowering act, rather than a psychologically harmful burden.

This study calls for a more contextualized, compassionate, and adaptive approach to the value of *birrul walidain*. By acknowledging the lived realities of the sandwich generation, Islamic teachings can be revitalized in ways that honor both the rights of parents and the dignity, well-being, and agency of adult children. Such an approach not only preserves the spiritual integrity of filial devotion but also strengthens the resilience of Muslim families in the face of modern socioeconomic challenges.

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