

Balancing Birr al-Wālidayn and Family Obligations: A Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Perspective on Sandwich Generation Families

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Abstract

The sandwich generation phenomenon has become a socio-economic issue growing within contemporary families, particularly among households facing economic instability. Individuals in this category bear the dual responsibility of supporting both their nuclear family and their elderly parents, thus facing a dilemma in determining financial priorities. This study analyzes the practice of financial priority among sandwich generation families in Sukorejo Village, Jember, from the perspective of Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah. Using a qualitative empirical method through interviews, observation, and documentation, the data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model. The findings reveal three main priority patterns: first, prioritizing parents due to the strong commitment to birr al-wālidayn and cultural values of filial piety; second, prioritizing the nuclear family due to urgent daily needs, children's education, and household welfare; and third, attempting to balance support for both generations despite limited and unstable income. From the Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah perspective, these practices reflect efforts to simultaneously realize ḥifẓ al-dīn (protection of faith), ḥifẓ al-nafs (protection of life), ḥifẓ al-nasl (protection of progeny), and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of property). The study concludes that financial priority among sandwich generation families cannot be understood as a binary choice between filial piety and responsibility toward the nuclear family, but rather as a process of balancing interconnected obligations to achieve maṣlaḥah (public good). This research contributes to the development of Islamic family law studies through a maqāṣid-based understanding of financial responsibilities in multigenerational families.

Keywords: Sandwich Generation; Livelihood Prioritization; Birr al-Wālidayn; Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah; Islamic Family Law.

Abstrak

Fenomena sandwich generation menjadi persoalan sosial-ekonomi yang berkembang dalam keluarga kontemporer, terutama pada rumah tangga dengan ketidakstabilan ekonomi. Individu dalam kategori ini memikul tanggung jawab ganda menafkahi keluarga inti sekaligus orang tua lanjut usia, sehingga menghadapi dilema prioritas nafkah. Penelitian ini menganalisis praktik prioritas nafkah pada keluarga sandwich generation di Desa Sukorejo, Jember, dalam perspektif Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah. Menggunakan metode kualitatif empiris melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, data dianalisis dengan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menemukan tiga pola prioritas: pertama, memprioritaskan orang tua karena birr al-wālidayn dan nilai budaya; kedua, mengutamakan keluarga inti karena kebutuhan mendesak; ketiga, menyeimbangkan kedua generasi meskipun terbatas. Dalam perspektif Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah, praktik ini mencerminkan upaya merealisasikan ḥifẓ al-dīn, al-nafs, al-nasl, dan al-māl secara simultan. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa prioritas nafkah bukanlah pilihan hitam-putih, melainkan proses penyeimbangan kewajiban untuk mewujudkan maṣlaḥah. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah pengembangan kajian hukum keluarga Islam berbasis maqāṣid mengenai tanggung jawab finansial dalam keluarga multigenerasi.

Kata Kunci: Sandwich Generation; Prioritas Nafkah; Birr al-Wālidayn; Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah; Hukum Keluarga Islam.

A. Introduction

The family occupies a central position in Islamic teachings as the primary institution responsible for realizing welfare, preserving human dignity, and ensuring social stability. Within Islamic family law, marriage establishes a set of rights and obligations, among which the most fundamental is the husband's responsibility to provide *nafaqah* (financial maintenance) for his wife and children. This obligation is firmly grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the consensus of Muslim jurists, making it a legal duty rather than a voluntary act.¹ Beyond this, Islam places extraordinary emphasis on *birr al-wālidayn* (filial piety), often mentioned immediately after the command to worship Allah, reflecting the significance of intergenerational responsibility. Parents are regarded as individuals who have devoted their lives to raising their children; therefore, children are expected to reciprocate through respect and support, particularly when parents become elderly and economically dependent.²

While these obligations appear complementary in principle, their implementation often becomes complicated in contemporary socio-economic contexts. Rapid social transformation, economic uncertainty, increasing living costs, and changing family structures have altered the dynamics of family responsibility. Individuals who are married and have dependent children frequently find themselves simultaneously responsible for supporting their aging parents.³ This condition is commonly known as the sandwich generation, a term referring to individuals who are "sandwiched" between the financial and emotional demands of two generations: their children and their parents. Positioned between these competing responsibilities, members of the sandwich generation often experience significant pressure in determining how limited resources should be allocated among family members.⁴

The phenomenon of the sandwich generation has become a growing concern in many countries due to demographic and socio-economic changes. Increased life expectancy has resulted in a larger elderly population requiring long-term support, while economic instability has made it more difficult for working-age adults to fulfill multiple financial obligations simultaneously. Research indicates that individuals belonging to the sandwich generation frequently encounter financial strain, emotional stress, role conflicts, and reduced quality of life.⁵ Such challenges are not merely economic but also involve ethical and relational dilemmas

¹ Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah. *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*. Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 2011, vol. 7, p. 509.

² Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf. *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1999, p. 85.

³ Raintung, Maria C., et al. "The Phenomenon of Sandwich Generation in Modern Families." *Journal of Family Studies* 31, no. 2 (2025): 145–162.

⁴ Teleng, Michael S., et al. "Multigenerational Responsibilities and Mental Health." *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 28, no. 1 (2025): 78–95.

⁵ Putri, Dian A. "Family Conflicts and Resource Distribution in Sandwich Generation Families." *Indonesian Journal of Sociology* 15, no. 3 (2022): 210–228.

concerning whom they should prioritize when resources are insufficient to satisfy all family needs.

In Indonesia, the phenomenon has become increasingly visible due to the continuing dominance of family-based welfare systems. Unlike many developed countries that provide comprehensive social protection programs for the elderly, support for aging parents in Indonesia largely remains the responsibility of family members. Consequently, adult children often become the primary source of financial assistance for elderly parents.⁶ This reality is further intensified in rural communities, where economic opportunities are limited and household incomes are often unstable. In such circumstances, financial decision-making is shaped not only by economic considerations but also by cultural norms, religious values, and emotional attachments that influence perceptions of obligation and responsibility.

These realities are particularly evident in Sukorejo Village, Jember, where the majority of residents work in informal sectors, including agricultural labor, seasonal farming, and handicraft production. Such occupations generally provide fluctuating and uncertain incomes, creating financial vulnerability for many household heads. Preliminary observations indicate that livelihood allocation among sandwich generation families is rarely guided by systematic financial planning; instead, decisions are frequently influenced by immediate needs, emotional considerations, and deeply rooted cultural expectations regarding filial piety. These differing patterns suggest that financial prioritization involves a dynamic negotiation between religious obligations, cultural expectations, and economic realities.⁷

Previous studies have explored various dimensions of the sandwich generation phenomenon. Raintung et al. (2025) argue that individuals face dual burdens associated with caring for aging parents while simultaneously supporting their own children. Teleng et al. (2025) found that multigenerational responsibilities frequently lead to financial stress and psychological pressure. Putri (2022) emphasizes that conflicts within families often arise not solely because of limited economic resources but because of disagreements concerning distribution.⁸ Within Islamic legal scholarship, Al-Zuhaili (2011) explains that the maintenance of wives and children constitutes a primary legal obligation (*wājib aṣlī*), whereas support for parents becomes obligatory under specific circumstances, particularly when parents are unable to provide for themselves.⁹

⁶ Hanifa, Siti. "Intergenerational Obligations and Family Structure Change in Indonesia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 50, no. 1 (2025): 34–52.

⁷ Preliminary observations, Sukorejo Village, Bangsalsari District, Jember Regency, 2025.

⁸ Raintung et al., "Sandwich Generation in Modern Families," 150; Teleng et al., "Multigenerational Responsibilities," 82; Putri, "Family Conflicts," 215.

⁹ Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami*, vol. 7, p. 512.

Despite these contributions, existing studies reveal several important gaps. Most research examines the sandwich generation from economic, sociological, or psychological perspectives, while limited attention has been given to its implications within Islamic family law. Previous studies tend to discuss obligations toward parents and obligations toward the nuclear family separately, rather than examining how individuals negotiate competing responsibilities when resources are limited. Empirical studies focusing on rural Muslim communities remain relatively scarce, and very few have analyzed livelihood prioritization through the framework of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which provides a comprehensive approach for balancing competing rights, obligations, and interests in pursuit of human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*).¹⁰

The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective is particularly relevant because the dilemma faced by sandwich generation families involves multiple dimensions of human welfare simultaneously. The obligation to support parents reflects the preservation of religious and moral values (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), while the fulfillment of the needs of spouses and children is closely connected to the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*).¹¹ Consequently, determining financial priorities is not merely a matter of economic calculation but also an effort to balance competing *maqāṣid* in a manner that maximizes benefit and minimizes harm. Based on these considerations, this study seeks to examine how sandwich generation families in Sukorejo Village prioritize financial obligations and to analyze these practices through the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, contributing to the growing discourse on family financial responsibility and contemporary Islamic family law.

B. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design with an empirical legal approach to examine the dynamics of livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families and to analyze such practices through the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Qualitative research was selected because it enables a comprehensive exploration of social phenomena by focusing on participants' experiences, values, and interpretations within their natural settings, particularly appropriate for investigating complex social realities that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement alone.¹² The empirical approach was employed to bridge the gap between normative Islamic legal principles and their practical implementation within society, as the issue of livelihood prioritization involves the interaction between Islamic legal obligations concerning nafaqah and the socio-cultural realities experienced by Muslim families.

¹⁰ Ferdiansyah, Ahmad, et al. "Islamic Legal Obligations and Local Customs." *Journal of Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 2 (2025): 98–115.

¹¹ Ibn Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah al-Islamiyah*. Tunis: Dar al-Tunisiyyah, 2001, p. 230.

¹² Creswell, John W., and Cheryl N. Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018, p. 45.

The research was conducted in Sukorejo Village, Jember, selected purposively for its rural characteristics, strong familial ties, limited economic resources, and predominance of informal-sector occupations. Participants, selected through purposive sampling, included sandwich generation individuals, their spouses, elderly parents, and local religious leaders. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation, with credibility ensured through source and method triangulation.

Data analysis employed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, with identified themes subsequently examined using the framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, particularly the dimensions of ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-nasl, and ḥifẓ al-māl.¹³ Through these stages, interview transcripts and field notes were coded according to recurring themes related to financial responsibility, parental support, family welfare, and livelihood prioritization, then systematically organized to identify patterns and relationships. The final conclusions were drawn through continuous interpretation and verification, enabling the study to understand how sandwich generation families negotiate competing financial obligations while pursuing the realization of maṣlaḥah.¹⁴

C. Discussion

1. Livelihood Prioritization Practices among Sandwich Generation Families in Sukorejo Village

The phenomenon of the sandwich generation has become increasingly evident in contemporary family life, particularly among economically vulnerable households in rural areas. This phenomenon refers to individuals who simultaneously bear responsibility for supporting their nuclear families while also providing financial assistance to aging parents who are no longer economically productive. Within such circumstances, livelihood allocation becomes a complex process that extends beyond economic calculations and enters the domains of morality, family relations, cultural expectations, and religious commitments.¹⁵ The findings of this study indicate that livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families in Sukorejo Village reflects a continuous negotiation between obligations toward elderly parents and responsibilities toward spouses and children. This negotiation is shaped by fluctuating household income, strong cultural values of filial devotion, and the practical realities of daily family needs.

¹³ Miles, Matthew B., A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2020, pp. 65–72.

¹⁴ Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018, p. 132.

¹⁵ Ayuni and Maryam, 'Work Life Balance Predicts Burnout Among Sandwich Generation'.

The majority of participants in this study worked as agricultural laborers, seasonal workers, and bead artisans, occupations characterized by unstable and unpredictable income. The seasonal nature of agricultural work and the fluctuating demand for handicraft products frequently resulted in uncertain earnings from one month to another. Such economic instability significantly influenced participants' ability to fulfill financial obligations toward multiple family members. Under these conditions, the allocation of financial resources often required difficult decisions regarding which family needs should be prioritized and which could be postponed. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies demonstrating that households operating within informal economic sectors often face substantial challenges in maintaining financial stability due to irregular income patterns and limited access to social protection mechanisms.¹⁶

Despite financial limitations, the findings reveal that a significant proportion of participants tended to prioritize financial support for their elderly parents. This pattern was strongly influenced by emotional attachment, moral responsibility, and the deeply rooted cultural value of filial devotion. For many participants, providing financial assistance to parents was perceived not merely as an economic transaction but as a moral obligation arising from gratitude for parental sacrifices throughout their lives. One participant explained that whenever he received income, his immediate concern was the condition of his parents, stating, *"I choose to help my parents first because they are already old. For me, this is a way of repaying their kindness. They raised me from childhood, so I feel responsible for ensuring that they can still eat properly and buy medicine when they need it. Sometimes my wife complains because household expenses are insufficient, but I try to explain that helping my parents is something I cannot neglect."* This statement illustrates that financial support for parents is frequently interpreted as an expression of reciprocity and moral indebtedness rather than a purely rational economic decision.¹⁷

A similar perspective was expressed by another participant who emphasized the vulnerability of his parents as the primary reason for prioritizing them. He stated, *"My parents are no longer working, and their daily needs depend on support from their children. Whenever I receive wages, the first thing that comes to my mind is whether they have enough money for food and medicine. Sometimes my own household has to adjust,*

¹⁶ Devian Ayu Putri Efendi and Sri Wahyuningsih, 'Understanding Gender Injustice in Early Marriage: Challenges Faced by Women', *GENDER EQUALITY: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 10, no. 1 (2024): 91–103, <https://doi.org/10.22373/equality.v10i1.22510>.

¹⁷ Bahiyah Ahmad et al., 'Assessing the Rate of Child Maintenance (Financial Support) from a Shariah Perspective: The Case of Malaysia', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 58, no. 2 (2020): 293–322, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2020.582.293-322>.

but as long as I can still help my parents, I will continue doing so.” Such narratives indicate that parental dependency significantly shapes livelihood allocation decisions. In this regard, economic assistance is viewed not only as a financial obligation but also as an ethical commitment embedded within long-standing family relationships.¹⁸

The findings further demonstrate that prioritization of parents is reinforced by social expectations within the local community. Participants repeatedly referred to prevailing cultural norms that associate caring for elderly parents with personal honor and moral integrity. Neglecting parents is often perceived as a violation of social and religious expectations, leading many participants to maintain financial support even under difficult economic circumstances. Consequently, livelihood prioritization is strongly influenced by collective values of intergenerational solidarity that remain deeply embedded in rural society.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the study also identified participants who placed greater emphasis on the needs of their nuclear families. These individuals argued that the daily welfare of spouses and children requires immediate attention because household survival depends upon the continuous fulfillment of basic needs. One participant explained, *“I still help my parents whenever possible, but my first responsibility is my wife and children. School fees, food expenses, and daily household needs cannot wait. If these needs are neglected, the impact is directly felt by my family.”* This statement reflects a different interpretation of responsibility, one that prioritizes the immediate welfare of dependents living within the same household.

Educational expenditures emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing such decisions. Participants frequently expressed concern regarding increasing educational costs and the necessity of investing in their children's future. As one father stated, *“I do not want my children to experience the same hardships that I faced. Education is expensive, but it is the only asset I can provide for their future. That is why I often prioritize school-related expenses before anything else.”* This perspective demonstrates that livelihood prioritization is not solely oriented toward present needs but is also shaped by aspirations for long-term family advancement and social mobility.²⁰

Between these two tendencies, a third group of participants attempted to maintain a balance between supporting elderly parents and fulfilling the needs of their nuclear

¹⁸ Katherine M. Hertlein and Markie L. C. Blumer, *The Couple and Family Technology Framework: Intimate Relationships in a Digital Age* (Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203081815>.

¹⁹ Hanifa, ‘Pengaruh Perubahan Sosial Terhadap Nilai-Nilai Tradisional Dalam Kehidupan Keluarga Modern’.

²⁰ Raintung et al., ‘Konseling Pastoral Untuk Sandwich Generation dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Keluarga dan Pekerjaan’.

families. However, the findings suggest that achieving such balance was often challenging due to unstable income and rising living costs. One participant explained, *“I try to divide my income fairly. Even if the amount is small, I want both my parents and my family to receive something. The problem is that my earnings are uncertain. Sometimes neither side receives enough, and that makes me feel guilty because I know both of them depend on me.”* This statement reflects the emotional burden commonly experienced by sandwich generation families, who often find themselves unable to fully satisfy the expectations of either generation.²¹

The findings also reveal that livelihood prioritization occasionally generates tension within family relationships. Several wives acknowledged the importance of supporting elderly parents but simultaneously expressed concerns regarding unmet household needs. One spouse explained, *“I understand that helping parents is important, and I never forbid my husband from doing so. However, there are times when household expenses become difficult to manage, especially when school fees and daily necessities continue to increase.”* Conversely, elderly parents occasionally experienced feelings of disappointment when financial support became irregular. As one parent noted, *“I do not want to burden my child, but when I receive no assistance at all, I feel sad because at my age I am no longer able to work as I used to.”* These contrasting perspectives illustrate the competing expectations that sandwich generation individuals must navigate in their everyday lives.

2. Between Birr al-Wālidayn and Family Responsibility: A Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Analysis of Livelihood Prioritization

The findings presented in the previous section demonstrate that livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families in Sukorejo Village cannot be understood merely as an economic decision concerning the distribution of financial resources. Rather, it reflects a complex interaction between religious obligations, cultural values, emotional attachments, and practical considerations of family welfare. The diverse patterns identified in the field reveal that participants continuously negotiate competing responsibilities toward elderly parents and nuclear family members. Such negotiations become particularly significant when household income is insufficient to satisfy all demands simultaneously. Within this context, the framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah offers a valuable analytical perspective because it emphasizes the realization of

²¹ Jonathan Morduch and Rachel Schneider, *The Financial Diaries: How American Families Cope in a World of Uncertainty* (Princeton University Press, 2017).

human welfare (maṣlaḥah) through the protection of essential interests and the balancing of competing rights and obligations.²²

One of the most prominent factors influencing livelihood prioritization among participants is the strong commitment to birr al-wālidayn. The findings indicate that many respondents considered support for elderly parents not merely as a social expectation but as a religious obligation deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. Several participants explicitly associated financial assistance with gratitude for parental sacrifices and viewed helping parents as an expression of faith and obedience to God.²³ This finding reflects the centrality of ḥifẓ al-dīn (the protection of religion) within their decision-making processes. In the maqāṣid framework, religious commitment extends beyond ritual observance and encompasses ethical conduct that strengthens moral relationships within society. Supporting parents therefore represents an important manifestation of religious values in daily life.

The emphasis placed on parental support is closely connected to Qur'anic teachings that command believers to honor and care for their parents, particularly when they reach old age. The obligation of birr al-wālidayn occupies a unique position within Islamic ethics because it is repeatedly mentioned alongside devotion to Allah. Consequently, many participants perceived financial support for parents as an extension of their religious identity. From a maqāṣid perspective, such practices contribute to the preservation of religious values by nurturing gratitude, compassion, and social responsibility.²⁴ However, the findings also reveal that prioritizing parents occasionally resulted in the reduction of household expenditures for spouses and children. This situation illustrates the practical challenge of balancing multiple dimensions of welfare when financial resources are limited.

The dilemma becomes more apparent when examined through the lens of ḥifẓ al-nafs (the protection of life). The findings indicate that participants frequently struggled to satisfy basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing for both generations simultaneously. Some respondents reported reducing household consumption, postponing purchases, or relying on informal debt to maintain financial support for parents while also providing for their families. Such strategies highlight the tension

²² Abu Ishaq Al-Syathibi and Beirut, 'Al-Muwafaqat Fi Ushul Al-Syari'at', *Beirut-Lebanon: Dar Al-Ma'arif, Ti*, 2004.

²³ Dr HUSNI FUADDI M.Pd M. E. Sy Dr NURHADI, S. Pd I. . S. E. Sy ., S. H. . M. Sy ., MH, *KONSEP NAFKAH KELUARGA DALAM ISLAM* (Guepedia, n.d.).

²⁴ Muhammad Zulfikar Nur Falah and Azzam Musoffa, 'PLATO'S ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY AND RELEVANCE TO THE CONCEPT OF BIRR AL-WĀLIDAYN IN THE QUR'AN', *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 9, no. 2 (2023): 245–62, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v9i2.278>.

between competing welfare needs. Within maqāṣid theory, the protection of life constitutes one of the most fundamental objectives of Islamic law because human survival serves as a prerequisite for the realization of all other interests.²⁵ Consequently, ensuring access to food, healthcare, and other basic necessities becomes a primary consideration in determining financial priorities.

The experiences of participants suggest that livelihood allocation is often driven by perceptions of vulnerability. Elderly parents who are unable to work due to age or illness are viewed as highly dependent and therefore deserving of immediate support. At the same time, spouses and children rely on the household head for daily subsistence and protection. The coexistence of these vulnerabilities places sandwich generation individuals in a difficult position because fulfilling one obligation may reduce their capacity to fulfill another.²⁶ This reality illustrates how financial decision-making is fundamentally linked to the pursuit of welfare and the prevention of harm, two central principles within maqāṣid thought. Rather than representing a simple choice between parents and children, livelihood prioritization reflects an ongoing effort to maximize collective welfare under conditions of scarcity.

The findings also highlight the relevance of ḥifẓ al-nasl (the protection of lineage and family continuity). Participants who prioritized their nuclear families frequently justified their decisions by referring to the needs of their children, particularly educational expenses.²⁷ School fees, uniforms, transportation costs, and healthcare expenditures were consistently identified as essential obligations that could not be postponed. Such concerns demonstrate that many participants viewed investment in children as an important responsibility associated with ensuring the future stability of the family. Within the maqāṣid framework, ḥifẓ al-nasl encompasses not only biological continuity but also the provision of conditions necessary for healthy family development, moral upbringing, and social advancement.²⁸

This perspective is consistent with classical Islamic legal discussions concerning the obligation of parents to provide maintenance and education for their children. The

²⁵ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, “Maqasid Al-Shari’ah”: The Objectives of Islamic Law’, *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 193–208.

²⁶ Subaidi Subaidi, ‘KONSEP NAFKAH MENURUT HUKUM PERKAWINAN ISLAM’, *Isti’dal : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 1, no. 2 (2014): 157–69, <https://doi.org/10.34001/istidal.v1i2.325>.

²⁷ Khoirul Umam Addzaky et al., ‘Deconstruction of Hifdzun Nasl in Maqasid Syari’ah: Analysis of the Childfree Phenomenon from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law’, *IN RIGHT: Jurnal Agama Dan Hak Azasi Manusia* 14, no. 1 (2025): 111–33, <https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v14i1.4164>.

²⁸ Nur Awaliyah, ‘Implementasi Program Kompak Pusaka Sakinah Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Secara Non-Litigasi Perspektif Maqāṣid al-Syari’ah: Studi Di Kantor Urusan Agama Kecamatan Bacukiki Barat Kota Parepare.’ (PhD Thesis, IAIN Parepare, 2024), <https://repository.iainpare.ac.id/id/eprint/7939/>.

Qur'an explicitly assigns responsibility for family maintenance to the father, while numerous juristic works emphasize the importance of safeguarding children's welfare.²⁹ Consequently, participants who prioritized household needs were not necessarily neglecting their parents; rather, they were responding to obligations they perceived as immediate and indispensable. The findings therefore suggest that competing financial priorities among sandwich generation families often reflect different interpretations of how welfare should be achieved rather than disagreements regarding the importance of family responsibility itself.

Another important dimension emerging from the data is ḥifẓ al-māl (the protection of wealth). Most participants in this study relied on informal-sector employment characterized by unstable and unpredictable income. Such economic conditions significantly affected their ability to maintain consistent financial support for multiple dependents.³⁰ The findings reveal that many respondents adopted various coping strategies to address financial limitations, including borrowing money from local shops, postponing non-essential expenditures, reducing consumption, and diversifying sources of income. These practices illustrate efforts to preserve household financial stability despite economic uncertainty.

Within maqāṣid theory, wealth is regarded as a necessary resource for sustaining human life and facilitating the fulfillment of religious and social obligations. The protection of wealth therefore involves not only acquiring financial resources but also managing them responsibly and preventing economic harm.³¹ The livelihood practices observed among participants demonstrate that financial prioritization is fundamentally connected to resource management. When income is limited, decisions regarding who receives support first become unavoidable. Consequently, participants continuously evaluate competing needs in an attempt to preserve both economic sustainability and family harmony.

The findings further reveal that many livelihood decisions were influenced by considerations of fairness and balance. Participants who attempted to divide their income between parents and nuclear family members often expressed feelings of responsibility toward both groups. Although they recognized that available resources were insufficient

²⁹ Subaidi, 'KONSEP NAFKAH MENURUT HUKUM PERKAWINAN ISLAM'.

³⁰ Ahmad Musadad et al., 'Reorienting Jamāluddīn 'Aṭīyyah's Maqāṣid al-Uṣrah in the Regulation of Polygamy in the Indonesian Compilation of Islamic Law', *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies* 9, no. 4 (2025): 429–47, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jfs.v9i4.19984>.

³¹ Uthman Mehdad Al-Turabi and Jasser Auda, 'Toward a Maqāṣid-Based Legal Reform: Systemic Thinking for Social Transformation in the Modern Muslim World', *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law* 8, no. 2 (2025): 209–28, <https://doi.org/10.35719/fhw10v84>.

to fully satisfy all demands, they sought to distribute support in ways that minimized dissatisfaction and maintained family relationships. Such behavior reflects an important maqāṣid principle: the pursuit of the greater benefit (jalb al-maṣlaḥah) and the prevention of greater harm (dar' al-mafṣadah). Rather than applying rigid priorities, participants frequently adopted flexible strategies based on changing circumstances and perceived levels of need.³²

These findings suggest that the livelihood practices of sandwich generation families can be understood as a process of negotiating multiple maqāṣid simultaneously. Support for parents reflects commitments to ḥifẓ al-dīn through the realization of birr al-wālidayn. The fulfillment of basic household needs corresponds to ḥifẓ al-naḥs. Investment in children's welfare and education contributes to ḥifẓ al-naṣl. Meanwhile, efforts to manage scarce financial resources and maintain economic stability represent manifestations of ḥifẓ al-māl.³³ The challenge faced by participants lies not in choosing one maqṣad over another but in balancing these interconnected objectives under conditions of economic constraint.

From this perspective, the findings indicate that livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families should not be understood through a binary framework that opposes parental support and family responsibility. Instead, both obligations constitute integral components of Islamic family ethics. The key issue concerns how these obligations can be balanced in a manner that maximizes overall welfare while minimizing potential harm. The empirical evidence from Sukorejo Village demonstrates that participants continuously engage in such balancing efforts despite limited resources and competing expectations.

Figure 1 *Between Birr al-Wālidayn and Family Responsibility: A Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Analysis of Livelihood Prioritization*

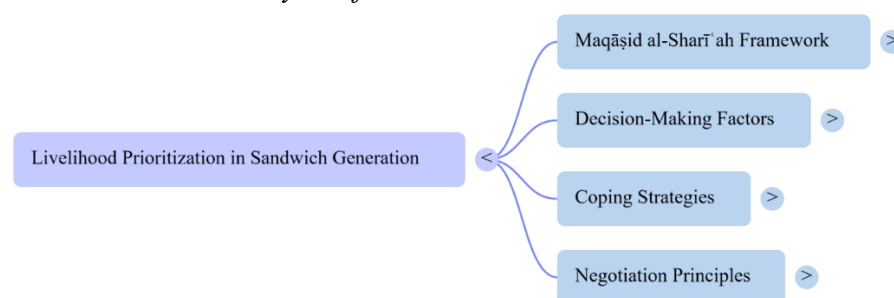


Figure 1 illustrates that livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families is a dynamic process shaped by the interaction of religious values, economic realities, family responsibilities, and social expectations. At the center of the framework

³² al-Zuhayli, *Fiqh Al-Islam Wa Adillatuhu*, vol. 4.

³³ Auda, *Re-envisioning Islamic Scholarship*.

is the challenge of allocating limited financial resources between the needs of elderly parents and those of the nuclear family. This process is influenced by the Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah framework, particularly the objectives of preserving religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl), which collectively guide decision-making toward the realization of maṣlaḥah. Financial priorities are further shaped by various decision-making factors, including economic capacity, parental dependency, children's needs, emotional attachment, and cultural expectations of birr al-wālidayn.³⁴ In response to these pressures, families employ coping strategies such as balancing support between generations, reducing expenditures, borrowing resources, and adjusting spending patterns according to available income. These decisions are ultimately negotiated through communication and deliberation within the household, reflecting an ongoing effort to achieve fairness, maintain family harmony, and fulfill competing obligations in accordance with Islamic ethical principles.

Therefore, this study argues that a maqāṣid-based understanding of livelihood prioritization requires attention to hierarchical welfare needs. Basic and urgent necessities related to survival, health, and family continuity should receive primary consideration, while support for elderly parents should remain an essential obligation adjusted according to actual needs and financial capacity. Such an approach does not diminish the importance of birr al-wālidayn; rather, it situates parental support within a broader framework of justice, responsibility, and welfare realization. By emphasizing the integration of ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-nasl, and ḥifẓ al-māl, the maqāṣid perspective provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how sandwich generation families navigate the complex realities of multigenerational financial responsibility in contemporary Muslim societies.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that livelihood prioritization among sandwich generation families in Sukorejo Village, Jember, is shaped by a complex interaction of economic constraints, moral obligations, cultural values, and religious commitments, revealing three dominant patterns: prioritizing elderly parents due to *birr al-wālidayn*, prioritizing the nuclear family's daily needs and children's education, or attempting to balance support for both generations despite limited income. From the perspective of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, financial support for elderly parents reflects *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, fulfilling the needs of spouses and children

³⁴ Sharifah Fadylawaty Syed Abdullah et al., 'Children's Etiquette Towards Parents Based on Kitab Al-Adab Al-Mufrad By Al-Bukhari: Etika Anak Terhadap Ibu Bapa Berdasarkan Kitab Al-Adab Al-Mufrad Karya Al-Bukhari', *Sains Insani* 10, no. 1 (2025): 51–61.

contributes to *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, while managing household resources corresponds to *ḥifẓ al-māl*, indicating that livelihood prioritization should not be understood as a binary choice between parental devotion and family responsibility but rather as a process of balancing interconnected obligations to maximize *maṣlaḥah* and minimize harm. This study further argues that a *maqāṣid*-based hierarchy of financial obligations provides a comprehensive framework wherein the fulfillment of essential (*ḍarūriyyāt*) needs of the nuclear family constitutes the primary responsibility of the household head, while support for elderly parents remains an important obligation according to their level of need and the family's financial capacity, enabling sandwich generation families to maintain both intergenerational solidarity and household stability while remaining consistent with the broader objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*.

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