# Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model (ISREM): Integrating Living Hadith, Madurese Local Wisdom, and Social Exchange Theory to Reconstruct Intergenerational Ethics

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**Abstract.** The phenomenon of the *sandwich generation* creates an ethical dilemma when modern economic demands conflict with religious obligations to care for aging parents. Financial and emotional pressures may lead *birr al-wālidayn* to be understood as a one-sided obligation rather than as a balanced intergenerational relationship. This study aims to reconstruct intergenerational ethics by integrating Living Hadith, Madurese local wisdom, and Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory to develop the Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model (ISREM). This study employs a library research using a Living Hadith approach and sociological analysis through Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory. The literature were analyzed using content analysis and conceptual synthesis. The findings indicate that the value of *birr al-wālidayn*, as received through the Madurese philosophies of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato* and *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*, can shape an intergenerational ethic that balances respect, reciprocal responsibility, and self-reliance. Based on this synthesis, ISREM is formulated around three main dimensions: *respect, reciprocity*, and *self-reliance*. The model recontextualizes the implementation of *birr al-wālidayn* to remain relevant to demographic changes and the challenges faced by the *sandwich generation*, while simultaneously enriching the study of Living Hadith and the sociology of Muslim families.

**Keywords:** *Sandwich generation*; Living Hadith; *Birr al-wālidayn*; Madurese Local Wisdom; Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The transformation of family structures in the twenty-first century has fundamentally altered patterns of intergenerational relationships across various parts of the world. Increasing life expectancy, declining fertility rates, delayed marriage, longer periods of

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U. Faruq et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of Islamic Studies (ICONIS 2026) & 400th Anniversary of Shekh Yusuf Al-Makassari*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 1043,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-845-0_24

education, and economic uncertainty have resulted in multiple generations living together within the same family for extended periods. These demographic changes have indeed strengthened opportunities for fostering intergenerational solidarity; however, at the same time, they have also generated new forms of economic dependency and caregiving responsibilities that were previously less prominent [1]. One of the most tangible consequences of these changes is the growing phenomenon of the sandwich generation, referring to adults who are simultaneously responsible for meeting the needs of two generations [1].

The sandwich generation refers to adults who are simultaneously responsible for caring for aging parents and meeting the needs of dependent children through financial, emotional, and direct caregiving support. Although the term initially emerged in demographic studies in Western countries, research has shown that the sandwich generation is a global phenomenon, primarily driven by population aging (demographic aging) and increasing life expectancy, resulting in a growing number of adults having to support two generations simultaneously [2]. Alburez-Gutierrez explains that the sandwich generation is a consequence of global demographic changes that increase intergenerational overlap (sandwichness), meaning that caregiving responsibilities can no longer be understood merely as an individual experience but rather as a structurally embedded demographic process.

This complexity subsequently gives rise to role conflict experienced by members of the sandwich generation. They are expected to simultaneously fulfill multiple roles as breadwinners, parents, children, and caregivers for aging parents [3].From a sociological perspective, this condition demonstrates that changes in social structures also transform patterns of role distribution within families. Intergenerational relationships become spaces for negotiating diverse interests, values, and obligations that cannot always be resolved solely through economic considerations. Rather, these relationships are also shaped by social norms, cultural practices, and value systems embedded within society, resulting in different communities developing distinct ways of understanding and managing intergenerational responsibilities [3].

In the context of Indonesian Muslim society, religious values concerning intergenerational responsibilities do not exist merely as standalone normative teachings but interact with local cultures that shape everyday practices. The Living Hadith perspective views hadith not only as religious texts but also as teachings that are lived and manifested through traditions, customs, and value systems that develop within society [4]. In Madurese society, for example, relationships between parents and children are shaped not only by the teaching of *birr al-wālidayn* but also by inherited philosophies of life passed down across generations. One such philosophy is reflected in *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, a principle that places the father (*bhuppa'*), mother (*bhâbhu'*), teacher (*ghuru*), and leader (*rato*) as four principal figures who must be respected and obeyed in hierarchical order [5]. This philosophy does not merely represent a hierarchy of respect but also reflects a moral order emphasizing the importance of honoring parents as a foundation of family and community life. Various studies have shown that this philosophy functions as a mechanism for transmitting values, constructing moral authority, and strengthening social cohesion within Madurese society [6].

In addition to this philosophy, Madurese society also recognizes the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo* ("water never flows upstream"), which conveys an ethical message concerning the importance of parental self-reliance as long as parents remain capable of working and meeting their own needs. Unlike *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, which emphasizes the dimension of children's respect for their parents, this proverb highlights the moral responsibility of parents not to burden the succeeding generation. These two values are not contradictory; rather, they complement one another in constructing balanced intergenerational relationships. While the former philosophy reinforces *vertical respect* toward parents, the latter instills an ethic of *self-reliance* as a form of intergenerational responsibility. Thus, family relationships are not built solely upon the children's obligation to honor and care for their parents, but also upon each generation's commitment to fulfill its role responsibly according to its respective capacities.

These values demonstrate that Madurese society possesses social and cultural capital that remains relevant to addressing contemporary transformations in family structures. Nevertheless, the growing phenomenon of the sandwich generation indicates that intergenerational ethics increasingly face new challenges. Rising life expectancy, the growing elderly population, economic uncertainty, and increasing educational costs mean that relationships between parents and children can no longer be understood solely through traditional patterns of obligation. Family responsibilities have become increasingly complex, involving negotiations over roles, the distribution of resources, and the need to balance respect for parents with the preservation of each generation's independence [7].

A number of studies have examined the sandwich generation phenomenon from demographic, psychological, economic, and family sociological perspectives. These studies have generally focused on caregiver burden, economic pressure, role conflict, psychological well-being, and changes in family functions [3]. On the other hand, studies on birr al-wālidayn have predominantly positioned hadith as a normative foundation for children's obligations toward their parents, while Living Hadith studies tend to describe forms of community reception of hadith as manifested in various local traditions. Meanwhile, research on Madurese culture has generally examined the philosophy of Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato' and various proverbs as expressions of cultural identity, without relating them to the dynamics of contemporary Muslim families resulting from demographic changes and the emergence of the sandwich generation phenomenon. Consequently, these studies remain fragmented and have yet to provide a conceptual framework that integrates sociological, hadith, and local cultural perspectives in explaining the ethics of intergenerational responsibility.

Building upon this research gap, this study proposes a reconstruction of Islamic family ethics through the integration of Prophetic hadith, the Living Hadith approach, family sociology theory, and Madurese local wisdom to develop the Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model (ISREM). This model is constructed through a synthesis of the value of birr al-wālidayn, which emphasizes respect for parents; the philosophy of Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato', which reinforces the moral authority of the family; and the proverb tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo, which promotes an ethic of parental self-

reliance as long as parents remain capable of supporting themselves. Through this synthesis, ISREM conceptualizes intergenerational relationships not as one-sided obligations but as reciprocal ethics that position each generation as a subject possessing both rights and responsibilities according to its respective stage of life. Thus, this model not only preserves the value of respect for parents as taught in the hadith but also develops the principles of self-reliance and shared responsibility as strategies for strengthening the resilience of Muslim families amid social change.

### 1.2 Research Questions

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study seeks to address two research questions:

1. Why do demographic changes and transformations in family structures necessitate the reconstruction of intergenerational ethics within contemporary Muslim families?
2. How can Prophetic hadith, the Living Hadith approach, family sociology theory, and Madurese local wisdom be integrated to develop the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) as a model of intergenerational ethics?

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Peter M. Blau, explains that social relationships are formed, maintained, and developed through processes of exchange that generate reciprocal exchange and mutual benefits between individuals and groups [8]. Unlike George C. Homans, who focuses primarily on individual behavior based on the principles of cost-benefit calculation, Blau emphasizes that social exchange develops into more complex relationships because it involves trust, moral obligation, legitimacy, and social integration. Social relationships are driven not only by economic interests but also by values, norms, and commitments that develop through repeated interactions [8].

From Blau's perspective, social exchange differs from economic exchange. Economic exchange occurs through direct transactions involving measurable values, whereas social exchange involves the provision of benefits that do not necessarily receive immediate or equivalent returns. Such relationships are built on trust, expectations of reciprocity, and long-term commitment. Therefore, social exchange serves as a foundation for the formation of stable relationships within families, communities, and society.

The family is one of the social institutions that most clearly demonstrates the practice of social exchange [9]. The relationship between parents and children involves not only the transfer of economic resources but also affection, care, protection, education, life experience, and emotional support. During the early stages of life, parents provide various forms of investment to their children without expecting immediate returns. Conversely, when parents enter old age and experience declining capacities, children pro-

vide support as a form of reciprocity for the social investments they previously received. Thus, the parent–child relationship constitutes a form of social exchange that unfolds throughout the *life course*, rather than a transactional relationship limited to a particular moment [10].

Nevertheless, Blau's theory does not regard reciprocity as a one-sided obligation. Social relationships remain stable when each party seeks to maintain a balance between rights and obligations according to their respective capacities. Persistent imbalances may lead to dependency, conflict, and the weakening of social integration. Therefore, the principle of reciprocity in Blau's theory provides a relevant conceptual foundation for understanding the dynamics of intergenerational responsibility in the *sandwich generation* phenomenon, in which relationships between parents and children require a balance between respect, support, and self-reliance.

### 2.2 Living Hadith

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, *Living Hadith* has developed into one of the most dynamic areas of research in contemporary hadith studies, particularly within Indonesian Islamic academia. Unlike classical hadith studies, which focus on authenticity (*ṣaḥīḥ*), transmission (*isnād*), and the legal interpretation (*fiqh al-ḥadīth*) of Prophetic traditions, the *Living Hadith* paradigm shifts scholarly attention toward how Muslims receive, interpret, transmit, and actualize hadith in their everyday social lives. This development reflects a broader epistemological transformation in Islamic studies, in which religious texts are no longer viewed merely as normative sources but also as living realities that are continuously negotiated through cultural practices and social interactions [4].

The emergence of Living Hadith was driven by the recognition that the influence of Prophetic traditions cannot be adequately understood through textual criticism alone. In many Muslim societies, hadith is manifested in various forms, including rituals, customary practices, oral traditions, collective memory, proverbs, social norms, and local institutions. Therefore, understanding the social life of hadith requires an approach that integrates textual analysis with perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. Qudsy et al. [11] argue that Living Hadith has revitalized hadith studies in Indonesia by expanding the object of inquiry from written texts to the dynamic interaction between Prophetic traditions and local cultures. Rather than merely asking whether a hadith is authentic, Living Hadith examines how hadiths—whether authenticated or widely accepted by communities—are understood, negotiated, transformed, and reproduced within particular social contexts.

One of the major contributions of *Living Hadith* lies in its distinctive epistemological orientation. According to Qudsy et al. [11], this field encompasses five interrelated analytical domains: *practice, reception, text, transmission,* and *transformation*. *Practice* refers to the manifestation of hadith in everyday religious life. *Reception* examines how communities understand and respond to Prophetic traditions. *Text* concerns the continued authority of hadith narratives as primary points of reference. *Transmission* explores the mechanisms through which hadith values are disseminated within social life, while

*transformation* analyzes how these values adapt to changing historical and cultural contexts. These five dimensions distinguish *Living Hadith* from the sociology and anthropology of religion because the hadith text remains positioned as an *epistemic reference* that dynamically interacts with local cultural realities.

In the context of this study, *Living Hadith* is employed as an analytical approach to understand how hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* are not merely interpreted as normative obligations of children toward their parents, but are also actualized in the everyday practices of Muslim family life. The values of respect, compassion, responsibility, and intergenerational care undergo processes of interpretation in accordance with the social contexts of particular communities. Therefore, the meaning of *birr al-wālidayn* cannot be separated from the cultural environments in which it is embedded, as culture functions as the medium through which the values of hadith are lived, transmitted, and sustained in everyday life.

The *Living Hadith* approach in this study is not intended to examine the validity of hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn*, but rather to explain how the values they embody are received and manifested within Madurese society. In this sense, *Living Hadith* serves as an analytical bridge connecting the normative teachings of Islam with the social practices of the community, thereby enabling a more contextual understanding of the ethics of intergenerational relationships in Muslim families. This approach is subsequently integrated with Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory and an analysis of Madurese local wisdom as the conceptual foundation for developing the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM).

### 2.3 Madurese Local Wisdom as an Ethical Foundation for Intergenerational Responsibility

Local wisdom refers to a set of values, norms, knowledge, and practices that develop within a particular community as a result of long-term interactions between people and their social, cultural, and historical environments. Local wisdom functions as a guide for regulating individual and collective behavior, maintaining social order, and serving as a mechanism for transmitting values from one generation to the next. According to Koentjaraningrat [12], culture encompasses not only the products of human creativity but also systems of ideas and values that serve as guidelines for action. Therefore, local wisdom can be understood as a manifestation of cultural values that are lived and continuously reproduced within society.

Sibarani [13] defines local wisdom as the indigenous knowledge or wisdom of a community that is transmitted across generations to regulate social life, address collective problems, and maintain balanced relationships among human beings, nature, and God. From this perspective, local wisdom functions not only as a form of cultural identity but also possesses an ethical dimension that shapes the character of a community. These values are transmitted through various media, including oral traditions, proverbs, customary practices, rituals, and social practices that continue to be maintained in everyday life.

Within Muslim communities, local wisdom often develops through a process of dialogue with Islamic teachings. This relationship is not necessarily hierarchical or subordinate; rather, it reflects a process of mutual interaction between religious values and local cultural values. The *Living Hadith* perspective explains that Prophetic hadith is not only understood as normative text but is also received and actualized through social practices shaped by the cultural context of a community [11]. Accordingly, various forms of local wisdom can be viewed as spaces through which hadith values are translated into social actions that correspond to the needs and lived experiences of local communities.

The Madurese community is one of the communities with a strong cultural value system governing social relationships, particularly intergenerational relationships within the family. One of its most well-known philosophies is *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, a principle that places the father (*bhuppa'*), mother (*bhâbhu'*), teacher (*ghuru*), and leader (*rato*) as figures who must be respected and obeyed in hierarchical order [5]. According to Wiyata [6], this philosophy does not merely indicate a social hierarchy but reflects a value system that cultivates respect for moral authority, strengthens social cohesion, and functions as a mechanism for socializing values within families and communities. Rozaki [14] likewise explains that the position of the family in Madurese society is closely connected to the transmission of religious, ethical, and leadership values, making respect for parents an important component of Madurese cultural identity.

In addition to this philosophy, Madurese society also recognizes various proverbs that embody moral values concerning family life. One of these is *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo* ("water never flows upstream"), which, in this study, is understood as a representation of intergenerational self-reliance ethics. The proverb conveys the principle that parents should maintain their economic and social independence as long as they remain capable of doing so, while dependence on their children is regarded as a condition that may arise when such capacities have diminished. Within the context of this study, this meaning is interpreted as a form of cultural reception of the value of responsibility within Muslim families. Thus, respect for parents is not manifested solely through children's obligation to honor and care for them, but also through parents' moral commitment not to burden the succeeding generation as long as they remain capable of fulfilling their social and economic functions.

When analyzed using Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory, these two forms of local wisdom demonstrate mechanisms of *reciprocity* within intergenerational relationships. The philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* represents the dimensions of respect and moral legitimacy that provide the foundation for relationships between children and parents, while the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo* introduces the dimensions of responsibility and self-reliance as mechanisms for maintaining balance within these relationships. In other words, family relationships are not constructed upon one-sided obligations but through an exchange of values, care, sacrifice, and responsibility that unfolds throughout the life course.

# 3 Research Method

## 3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study employs *library research* with a qualitative approach oriented toward *conceptual model development* [15]. Unlike literature-based studies that merely describe existing scholarship, this research aims to conduct a conceptual synthesis of various theoretical perspectives to reconstruct intergenerational ethics within Muslim families in response to the *sandwich generation* phenomenon. Accordingly, the study does not merely identify existing concepts but also develops a new conceptual framework, namely the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM).

The approach employed in this study is Living Hadith, which examines how hadith is understood, received, and actualized within the social life of communities [11]. In this study, the Living Hadith approach is used to examine the actualization of hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* within the local wisdom of the Madurese community, particularly through the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* and the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*. The findings are subsequently analyzed using Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory to explain the mechanisms of reciprocity in intergenerational relationships, which are then synthesized into the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM).

## 3.2 Data Sources

This study draws on two categories of sources: primary and secondary sources. **Primary sources** consist of key literature serving as the conceptual foundation of the study, including hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* and their commentaries (*shurūḥ al-ḥadīth*), scholarly works on Living Hadith, Peter M. Blau's *Exchange and Power in Social Life* as the principal source for Social Exchange Theory, and literature addressing Madurese local wisdom, particularly the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* and the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*. **Secondary sources** are obtained from reputable scholarly articles, books, research findings, reports from national and international institutions, and statistical documents related to demographic changes, transformations in family structures, the *sandwich generation* phenomenon, family sociology, and Muslim family resilience.

## 3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentary research, involving the identification, selection, and analysis of sources relevant to the focus of the study. The literature search covered academic books, indexed scholarly journals, conference proceedings, and official documents from institutions such as Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS), the United Nations (UN), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The literature was selected based on several criteria, including its relevance to the research topic, the credibility of the authors and publishers, the recency of publication, and its contribution to the development of the research concepts. The selected literature

was subsequently classified into several main themes: demographic change, the *sandwich generation*, Living Hadith, *birr al-wālidayn*, Madurese local wisdom, and Social Exchange Theory.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using *content analysis* combined with *conceptual analysis* [16]. Content analysis was employed to identify and interpret the key concepts found across the selected literature, while conceptual analysis was used to establish relationships among these concepts and develop a coherent theoretical framework.

The analysis was conducted in five stages. First, the study identified the main concepts related to the *sandwich generation* phenomenon, *birr al-wālidayn*, Living Hadith, Madurese local wisdom, and Social Exchange Theory. Second, these concepts were categorized into interrelated thematic areas. Third, the relationships among the concepts were interpreted using Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory as the analytical perspective. Fourth, the findings were synthesized through the Living Hadith approach to explain the actualization of hadith within the Madurese cultural context. Fifth, the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) was reconstructed as an intergenerational ethical model that integrates hadith values, local wisdom, and sociological theory to address the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim families [16].

## 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Demographic Changes and the Transformation of Intergenerational Relationships in the *Sandwich Generation* Phenomenon

Demographic changes have become one of the major factors transforming family life across countries. Declining birth rates, increasing life expectancy, and the growing number of older adults have significantly shifted population age structures. These shifts not only affect population composition but also transform patterns of intergenerational relationships, family support systems, and the distribution of responsibilities among family members. Consequently, demographic issues can no longer be viewed solely as matters of population dynamics but must also be understood as social issues that affect family resilience and societal well-being [17].

The United Nations explains that the world is undergoing a demographic transition characterized by declining fertility and increasing life expectancy. These conditions have contributed to a growing proportion of older adults in nearly all regions of the world. At the same time, the working-age population is growing more slowly than in previous periods. These changes have resulted in a continued increase in the old-age dependency ratio, thereby increasing the need for family support systems and social protection. Such transformations constitute one of the major challenges faced by societies entering the era of population ageing [18].

Indonesia is exhibiting trends consistent with these global developments. The results of the 2025 Intercensal Population Survey (SUPAS) indicate that Indonesia's popula-

tion growth rate has slowed to 1.08% per year. During the same period, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) reached 2.13 children per woman, bringing it increasingly close to the population replacement level. In addition, the proportion of older adults has reached 11.97%, officially placing Indonesia in the category of an ageing population. Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) also reported that the dependency ratio increased to 45.05%, indicating that every 100 people of working age support approximately 45 people of non-working age [19]. These data demonstrate that demographic changes have substantially altered Indonesia's population age structure.

These demographic changes have occurred alongside transformations in family structures. Modernization, urbanization, increasing population mobility, and greater female participation in the workforce have encouraged a shift from extended families toward nuclear families [9]. As a result, the number of family members available to share caregiving responsibilities has become increasingly limited. At the same time, longer life expectancy means that parents require family support for a longer period than previous generations. This condition has transformed intergenerational relationship patterns, which were previously supported by extended family networks and have become increasingly dependent on nuclear families [3].

This transformation has given rise to the phenomenon known as the *sandwich generation*. Miller [20] coined this term to describe adults who must simultaneously fulfill two responsibilities: caring for aging parents and meeting the needs of children who remain dependent on them [21].

The *sandwich generation* phenomenon ultimately demonstrates that demographic changes have fundamentally transformed the functions of the family. In the past, extended families enabled caregiving responsibilities to be distributed among a larger number of family members; today, nuclear families must shoulder a substantial proportion of these responsibilities. Working-age adults are responsible not only for meeting the economic and caregiving needs of their children but also for providing financial, emotional, and physical care to parents entering old age [21]. This condition increases economic burdens, reduces the time available for family and work, and heightens the risk of role conflict and psychological exhaustion. Various studies have shown that these burdens can affect individual well-being, the quality of family relationships, and even the sustainability of the family's function as a primary support system [20].

From the perspective of Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory, these changes indicate a shift in the mechanisms of reciprocity within intergenerational relationships. Social exchange, which previously unfolded gradually across the life course, now occurs simultaneously across generations. Working-age adults are expected to fulfill obligations toward two generations at once, while their available resources remain relatively limited. An imbalance between demands and available resources may undermine the quality of intergenerational relationships if it is not supported by values capable of guiding the equitable and sustainable distribution of responsibilities.

Therefore, the *sandwich generation* phenomenon should not be understood merely as an economic issue or as an increase in caregiving burdens, but also as an indication of the transformation of family functions resulting from social change [22]. This transformation calls for a reconstruction of the intergenerational ethical paradigm that not

only emphasizes children's obligation to honor and care for their parents but also promotes the self-reliance of each generation, reciprocal responsibility, and family solidarity. Such an ethical paradigm is essential to ensure that intergenerational relationships remain balanced amid demographic changes and transformations in contemporary family structures.

### 4.2 Living Hadith and Madurese Local Wisdom in Constructing Intergenerational Ethics

The social changes that have given rise to the *sandwich generation* phenomenon demonstrate that Muslim families require an ethical foundation that is not merely normative but also contextual. In this context, the Living Hadith approach provides a framework for understanding how hadith extends beyond religious texts and becomes embedded in the social and cultural practices of communities. This approach recognizes that the meaning of hadith continues to be shaped through processes of reception, interpretation, and actualization in everyday life [11]. Accordingly, hadith values can be manifested through traditions, customary practices, and philosophies of life that develop within communities.

Within Living Hadith studies, communities are not merely recipients of hadith teachings but also subjects who actualize hadith values in accordance with their social and cultural contexts. Such actualization does not seek to alter the substance of Islamic teachings but rather represents a form of dialogue between religious texts and social realities. Therefore, local culture need not always be positioned as something contrary to religious teachings. Instead, culture can serve as a medium for strengthening the internalization of Islamic values, provided that it does not conflict with the principles of Islamic law (*sharia*) [11].

One of the principal values embedded within Muslim communities is the teaching of *birr al-wālidayn* (dutifulness to parents). The Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions consistently place respect for and kindness toward parents among the highest moral obligations, immediately following the command to affirm the oneness of Allah. This is reflected in hadiths narrated by al-Bukhari [23] and Muslim [24]. The hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* emphasize not only symbolic respect but also children's responsibility to provide attention, affection, and assistance to their parents as they enter old age. This value constitutes a foundational ethical principle for intergenerational relationships within Muslim families. Al-Suyuthi explains that dutifulness to parents encompasses treating them with kindness and doing things that bring them happiness. It also includes extending kindness to their friends and those whom they love [25].

The hadith narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim addresses the question of which deeds are most beloved to Allah. The Prophet's answer presents an order of fulfilling obligations toward Allah: performing prayer on time, followed by dutifulness to parents. This sequence reflects the understanding that prayer constitutes a right owed to Allah, while dutifulness to parents follows immediately thereafter [26]. On various occasions, the Prophet did not speak without considering the circumstances; rather, he adapted his responses to the situation and the person with whom he was speaking. In this particular hadith, the Prophet was questioned by a Companion named ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd,

who was an orphan living with his mother. This personal circumstance was also a consideration in understanding the context of the Prophet's response.

Understanding this hadith requires a comprehensive approach by relating it to other hadiths that convey similar meanings. This approach is important for obtaining a more complete understanding while avoiding partial interpretations. In the context of the *sandwich generation*, the teaching of *birr al-wālidayn* is closely related to children's responsibilities toward their parents. Islamic teachings encourage children to treat their parents well, provide care and attention, and assist them, including in meeting their needs. However, this teaching should be understood in balance with the principle of self-reliance and an individual's capacity to meet their own needs. The Prophet said, "Whoever strives to remain self-sufficient, Allah will make him self-sufficient, and whoever seeks contentment, Allah will grant him contentment" (narrated by al-Bukhari [23] and Muslim [24]). This hadith emphasizes the importance of cultivating self-reliance and preserving personal dignity by avoiding dependence on others.

This principle is also relevant for parents in addressing the challenges of the *sandwich generation*. Parents need to prepare independently for old age, including through sound financial planning, so that their living needs in later life do not become entirely dependent on their children. Such an attitude does not diminish children's obligation to practice *birr al-wālidayn*; rather, it creates healthier and more proportionate intergenerational relationships. Thus, parents can demonstrate love for their children by cultivating self-reliance from an early stage, while children can continue to practice *birr al-wālidayn* based on empathy, awareness, and religious devotion, rather than solely because of economic pressure or obligations perceived as burdens.

In Madurese society, the value of *birr al-wālidayn* finds its actual expression through various forms of local wisdom. One of the most well-known philosophies is *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, which establishes a hierarchy of respect toward fathers, mothers, teachers, and leaders. This philosophy positions parents as the primary moral authorities in an individual's life. Respect for parents is manifested not only through obedience but also through the responsibility to uphold the family's good name, care for parents in their old age, and transmit inherited values across generations [6]. From the perspective of Living Hadith, this philosophy can be understood as a form of cultural reception of the Prophetic teachings concerning respect for parents.

However, Madurese society also recognizes the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*, which literally means "water never flows upstream." This proverb conveys the message that parents should strive to remain self-reliant as long as they retain the capacity to do so. Dependence on children is viewed as an emergency condition rather than an ideal state to be anticipated. This value emphasizes the importance of maintaining dignity (*self-respect*), a strong work ethic, and personal responsibility into old age. Thus, the relationship between parents and children is built upon mutual respect rather than merely economic dependency.

At first glance, the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* and the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo* appear to convey different messages. The former emphasizes children's respect for their parents, whereas the latter emphasizes parental self-reliance. However, the two are in fact complementary. Respect for parents does not equate to creating dependency, just as parental self-reliance does not mean rejecting children's

affection and support. Rather, these two values construct a balanced intergenerational relationship that integrates respect, responsibility, and self-reliance within a single framework of family ethics.

This analysis is consistent with Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory. Blau explains that social relationships are sustained when each party receives recognition, trust, and benefits through mechanisms of reciprocity [8]. Within families, reciprocity is not necessarily expressed through material exchanges but also through affection, respect, care, and moral responsibility. Parents provide care, education, and sacrifice during the early stages of their children's lives. In return, children reciprocate through respect, care, and support when their parents enter old age. At the same time, the value of self-reliance conveyed through the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo* helps prevent these relationships from developing into exploitative arrangements or becoming entirely dependent on one party.

In the context of the *sandwich generation* phenomenon, maintaining such a balance has become increasingly important. Economic pressures, transformations in family structures, and rising life expectancy often compel the working-age generation to bear increasingly substantial responsibilities. If intergenerational relationships are understood solely as a one-sided obligation of children toward their parents, achieving a balanced social exchange becomes increasingly difficult. Conversely, when respect for parents is combined with the principle of self-reliance for each generation, family relationships can develop into more adaptive forms that respond to social change without abandoning the principle of *birr al-wālidayn*.

Thus, the Living Hadith approach demonstrates that the hadith concerning *birr al-wālidayn* does not merely live through practices of respect toward parents but also evolves into a form of social ethics that aligns with the local wisdom of Madurese society. The integration of hadith values, the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*, and Social Exchange Theory produces an understanding that ideal intergenerational relationships are built upon three fundamental principles: *respect*, *reciprocity*, and *self-reliance*. These three principles constitute the conceptual foundation subsequently reconstructed into the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM), an intergenerational ethical model for Muslim families facing the challenges of the *sandwich generation*.

### 4.3 Reconstructing Intergenerational Ethics toward the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM)

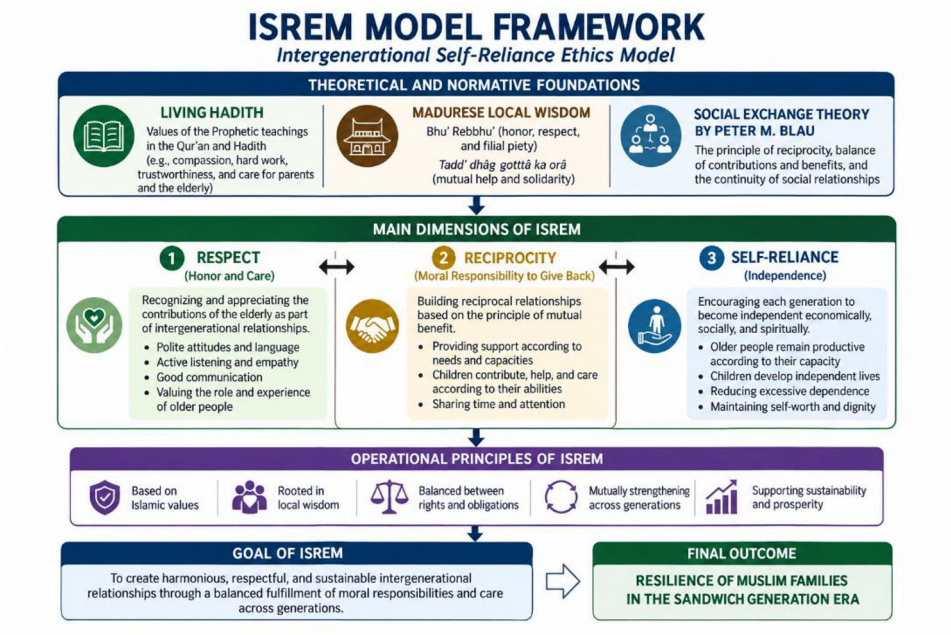
The discussion in the preceding subsection demonstrates that the *sandwich generation* phenomenon is a consequence of demographic changes and transformations in family structures. These changes have shifted intergenerational relationship mechanisms from processes that previously unfolded sequentially to those that now occur simultaneously. Meanwhile, the Living Hadith approach reveals that Madurese society has developed cultural values that embody Prophetic teachings concerning *birr al-wālidayn*. These findings indicate that Muslim families require an ethical paradigm capable of maintaining a balance between respect for parents, intergenerational responsibility, and the self-reliance of each generation.

From the perspective of Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory, stable social relationships are built upon the principle of *reciprocity*. Each individual contributes to others while simultaneously receiving recognition, support, or benefits that sustain the continuity of the relationship. This principle applies not only to economic relationships but also to family relations. Parents provide affection, care, education, and sacrifice to their children from an early age. In return, children reciprocate through respect, care, and support when their parents enter old age. Such relationships reflect a process of social exchange that unfolds throughout the life course.

However, the *sandwich generation* phenomenon demonstrates that this mechanism of reciprocity faces new challenges. The working-age generation is not only expected to fulfill its role as children but also as parents and family breadwinners. Consequently, intergenerational relationships may become imbalanced when the majority of responsibilities are concentrated on a single generation [20]. Therefore, reconstructing family ethics requires more than emphasizing children's obligation to honor and care for their parents. It also requires cultivating an awareness that each generation has a responsibility to maintain an appropriate level of self-reliance according to its capacities. In this way, respect for parents can be preserved without compromising the principles of fairness and the sustainability of family relationships.

This ethical reconstruction derives its normative legitimacy from the Living Hadith approach. Hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* teach respect, compassion, and responsibility toward parents as part of obedience to Allah. However, the Living Hadith approach demonstrates that these values are not practiced uniformly but interact with local cultural contexts. In Madurese society, respect for parents is manifested through the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, while the value of self-reliance is reflected in the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*. These two values are not contradictory; rather, they establish a balance between respect and self-reliance in intergenerational relationships.

Based on a synthesis of Social Exchange Theory, the Living Hadith approach, and Madurese local wisdom, this study reconstructs the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) as an intergenerational ethical framework for Muslim families. The model is based on the assumption that family resilience is determined not only by the strength of emotional bonds but also by the balance of reciprocal relationships established through respect, responsibility, and the self-reliance of each generation.




ISREM consists of three main dimensions. The first dimension is *respect*, referring to respect for parents as the moral foundation of intergenerational relationships. This dimension is rooted in the teaching of *birr al-wālidayn* and is represented in the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*. Respect is manifested not only through obedience but also through care, good communication, and a willingness to accompany and support parents in old age.

The second dimension is *reciprocity*, referring to reciprocal responsibility across generations. This dimension is derived from Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory, which positions reciprocity as the foundation of sustainable social relationships. In the context of Muslim families, reciprocity means that each generation has complementary rights and responsibilities. Parents are responsible for educating and preparing their children to become self-reliant individuals, while children are responsible for respecting and assisting their parents according to their capacities. Thus, family relationships are built upon mutual giving rather than mutual burden.

The third dimension is *self-reliance*, referring to intergenerational self-reliance. This dimension is developed from the Madurese proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*, which teaches that individuals should maintain their self-reliance as long as they remain capable of doing so. In the context of family relationships, self-reliance does not mean individualism or the rejection of family assistance; rather, it refers to efforts to minimize unnecessary dependency so that intergenerational relationships can remain balanced. This principle also encourages parents to prepare for old age economically, socially, and spiritually without becoming entirely dependent on their children.

These three dimensions constitute an integrated and mutually reinforcing framework. *Respect* preserves the value of honoring parents, *reciprocity* ensures a balance between intergenerational rights and responsibilities, while *self-reliance* encourages

each generation to develop the capacity to fulfill its responsibilities independently. The integration of these three dimensions produces an ethical model that is better adaptive to demographic changes than approaches that emphasize only the one-sided obligation of children toward their parents.

Thus, the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) is not intended to replace the concept of *birr al-wālidayn* but rather to reconstruct its implementation so that it remains relevant to the challenges faced by contemporary Muslim families. The model maintains that respect for parents remains a fundamental principle, but that such respect should be accompanied by reciprocal responsibility and the self-reliance of each generation. Through this approach, ISREM offers an intergenerational ethical paradigm capable of maintaining balanced family relationships amid the increasing prevalence of the *sandwich generation* phenomenon and ongoing demographic changes.

### 4.4 Implications of ISREM for the Resilience of Contemporary Muslim Families

Demographic changes, transformations in family structures, and the increasing prevalence of the *sandwich generation* phenomenon demonstrate that Muslim families face increasingly complex challenges. Existing studies have largely emphasized solutions through economic, psychological, or social welfare policy approaches. Although these dimensions are important, such approaches do not fully address the ethical dimension underlying intergenerational relationships. As a result, relationships between parents and children are often understood as being based on one-sided obligations, whether in the form of expectations that children demonstrate filial devotion or expectations that parents place upon their children. Such conditions may create role imbalances when families face increasingly rapid social change.

The *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) offers a new paradigm by conceptualizing intergenerational relationships as relationships built upon respect, reciprocal responsibility, and self-reliance. The model does not diminish the meaning of *birr al-wālidayn* but reconstructs its implementation in accordance with contemporary social changes. From this perspective, filial devotion to parents is manifested not only through material support but also through good communication, care, respect for parental dignity, and appropriate assistance according to their needs. At the same time, parents are encouraged to prepare for old age independently as long as they remain capable, enabling intergenerational relationships to develop as mutually strengthening relationships rather than relationships based on one-sided dependency.

The theoretical implication of ISREM lies in its effort to integrate three perspectives that have generally been examined separately. First, the Living Hadith approach provides a normative foundation by demonstrating that the hadith concerning *birr al-wālidayn* continues to live and acquire meaning through the social practices of communities. Second, Madurese local wisdom demonstrates that Islamic values can interact constructively with local culture through the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* and the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*. Third, Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory provides an analytical framework for explaining how balanced inter-

generational relationships are constructed through the principle of reciprocity. The integration of these three perspectives enriches the sociology of Islamic families while also expanding Living Hadith studies from a predominantly descriptive orientation toward the reconstruction of a social ethical model.

In addition to its theoretical contribution, ISREM has practical implications for strengthening the resilience of Muslim families. Within the family context, this model can serve as a guide for fostering more open intergenerational communication, distributing family responsibilities proportionally, and cultivating a culture of mutual respect without undermining the value of self-reliance. For parents, ISREM encourages preparation for old age through strengthening economic, health, and spiritual dimensions so that dependence on children can be minimized. For children, the model affirms that respect for parents remains a moral obligation but should be practiced wisely in accordance with their capacities and family circumstances.

To clarify these contributions, the implications of ISREM for the resilience of Muslim families are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Implications of ISREM for the Resilience of Muslim Families

| ISREM Dimension | Conceptual Foundation | Implementation in Muslim Families | Implications for Family Resilience | Theoretical and Practical Contributions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Respect*** *(Respect)* | Hadith on *birr al-wālidayn*; the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'* | hildren respect their parents, communicate courteously, care for them, and fulfill their rights according to their capacities without undermining their dignity. | Strengthens emotional bonds, increases intergenerational trust, and reduces family conflict. | Expands the meaning of *birr al-wālidayn* as a relational ethic that is adaptive to social change. |
| ***Reciprocity*** *(Reciprocal Responsibility)* | Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory; the Islamic concept of mutual assistance (*ta'āwun*) | arents educate and prepare their children to become self-reliant, while children provide care and support to their parents according to their capacities. | Creates a balance between rights and responsibilities, preventing family relationships from becoming overly dependent on one party. | Integrates sociological theory with Islamic family ethics through the concept of intergenerational reciprocity. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Self-Reliance*** *(Intergenerational Self-Reliance)* | Madurese proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*; the Islamic values of *ikhtiyār* and personal responsibility | Parents prepare for old age by strengthening their economic, health, and spiritual self-reliance, while children are also encouraged to develop self-reliance from an early age. | Reduces excessive dependency, strengthens family economic resilience, and alleviates the burden on the *sandwich generation.* | Introduces a new perspective in which self-reliance constitutes part of the ethics of *birr al-wālidayn* rather than contradicting it. |
| Value Integration (ISREM)) | Synthesis of Living Hadith, Madurese local wisdom, and Social Exchange Theory | Family decision-making is guided by the principles of respect, shared responsibility, and self-reliance. | Builds intergenerational relationships that are better adaptive to demographic changes and transformations in family structures. | Produces a contextual model of intergenerational ethics for Indonesian Muslim families. |

In the field of education, ISREM can serve as a foundation for developing Islamic family education materials that emphasize a balance between intergenerational rights and responsibilities. The values embedded in this model can be integrated into character education within families, schools, and religious educational institutions. Thus, the understanding of *birr al-wālidayn* need not remain limited to the dimension of obedience but can develop into an ethic of family relationships that is adaptive to social change.

The model also has implications for the development of family empowerment programs and public policies. Institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), and social service agencies can utilize ISREM principles as one of the foundations for developing family development programs, premarital education, family counseling, and support services for older adults. Such an approach can strengthen family resilience by fostering a culture of mutual support rather than relying solely on economic assistance.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations because it employs a library research approach, making ISREM conceptual in nature. The model was developed through a synthesis of various sources on Living Hadith, Madurese local wisdom, and Social Exchange Theory; therefore, its effectiveness in actual family life has not yet been empirically tested. Future research should conduct field studies to examine the validity and effectiveness of ISREM across diverse Muslim family contexts in Indonesia. Such empirical testing is essential to ensure that the model possesses not only conceptual strength but also adequate empirical support.

Thus, ISREM offers an intergenerational ethical paradigm that positions *respect*, *reciprocity*, and *self-reliance* as three complementary principles. These three principles can strengthen the resilience of Muslim families in responding to the challenges posed by demographic changes, transformations in family structures, and the growing prevalence of the *sandwich generation*. Therefore, ISREM not only contributes to the development of Living Hadith studies and the sociology of Muslim families but also offers a relevant ethical framework for fostering resilient, equitable, and sustainable Muslim families.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that demographic changes and transformations in family structures have altered patterns of intergenerational relationships within contemporary Muslim families. Increasing life expectancy, declining fertility rates, and the shift from extended families toward nuclear families have resulted in the working-age generation shouldering dual responsibilities as caregivers for children and supporters of aging parents. This condition has given rise to the *sandwich generation* phenomenon, which not only increases economic burdens but also generates role conflict, psychological pressure, and changes in family functions. From a family sociology perspective, particularly Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory, these changes have shifted the mechanisms of intergenerational reciprocity because rights, responsibilities, and resources are no longer distributed in a balanced manner. Therefore, demographic changes create not only challenges to family welfare but also a need to reconstruct intergenerational ethics capable of maintaining a balance between respect for parents, reciprocal responsibility, and the self-reliance of each generation.

This study also demonstrates that intergenerational ethics can be reconstructed through the integration of Prophetic hadith, the Living Hadith approach, family sociology theory, and Madurese local wisdom. Hadiths concerning *birr al-wālidayn* provide a normative foundation for respect and responsibility toward parents. The Living Hadith approach explains how these values continue to live and are actualized through the social practices of communities. In the Madurese context, such actualization is reflected in the philosophy of *Bhuppa', Bhâbhu', Ghuru, Rato'*, which emphasizes respect for parents, as well as the proverb *tadhâ' aèng aghili ka olo*, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining self-reliance as long as one remains capable. Furthermore, Peter M. Blau's Social Exchange Theory provides an analytical framework for explaining that sustainable intergenerational relationships must be built upon the principle of reciprocity. Accordingly, respect for parents should not be understood as a one-sided relationship of dependency but as a mutually supportive relationship.

Based on the synthesis of these four perspectives, this study develops the *Intergenerational Self-Reliance Ethics Model* (ISREM) as an intergenerational ethical model for contemporary Muslim families. ISREM is built upon three main dimensions: *respect, reciprocity,* and *self-reliance*. The *respect* dimension emphasizes the importance of honoring parents as a fundamental value in Islam. The *reciprocity* dimension conceptualizes intergenerational relationships as reciprocal relationships that balance the

rights and responsibilities of each family member. Meanwhile, the *self-reliance* dimension emphasizes that each generation should prepare for economic, social, and spiritual independence in order to prevent excessive dependency. The integration of these three dimensions produces an ethical model that is better adaptive to demographic changes and the challenges of the *sandwich generation*, while also expanding the implementation of *birr al-wālidayn* from a normative obligation into a contextual framework of intergenerational ethics.

This study has limitations because it employs a library research approach; consequently, ISREM remains at the conceptual level and has not yet been empirically tested. Future research should therefore conduct field studies to examine the validity, effectiveness, and applicability of ISREM across diverse Muslim family contexts. In addition, comparative studies involving local wisdom from other regions are important for assessing the flexibility of the model across different cultural contexts and for enriching the development of Living Hadith studies, family sociology, and Muslim family resilience research.

**Disclosure of Interests.** The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, writing, or publication of this article.

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