

Edisi Januari - Jun 2025

MITASA



Suara

MITASA

*Adab Sebagai Asas
Kecemerlangan Akademik
dan Pembentukan Sahsiyah*

*Biar Wasiat Jadi
Suara Terakhir*

*Merungkai Potensi:
Prestasi Pekerja Dalam
Era Kerja Jarak Jauh*

*Motivasi Diri Berdasarkan
Penilaian Prestasi*

*Cabaran dan Keperluan
Graduan Teknologi
Maklumat Dalam Dunia
Pekerjaan Masa Kini*

*"Selamat Ke Kita Ni?":
Meneroka 'OSH'*

*Kursus Pengurusan Operasi
Perkhidmatan - Membentuk
Insan Adabi Cemerlang*



PERJUANGAN YANG BERTERUSAN

Surviving Life As The Sandwich Generation

Irma Wahyuni Ibrahim
Pensyarah Akademi Pengajian Bahasa

Her heart was palpitating, her palms were sweating, and uneasiness settled over her as she sat in the driver's seat of her car. She had left the clinic, where the doctor had diagnosed her with a very high blood pressure of 170/90. After several minutes of consultation, the female doctor concluded that her elevated reading was caused by stress. Several factors contributed to her condition, including her age, full-time career, responsibilities of taking care of her family, and caring for her aging parents. This is the reality faced by the sandwich generation, a group whose numbers are steadily growing worldwide. According to the Social Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Malaya in 2024, the sandwich generation refers to adults who are fully responsible for caring for their aging parents while simultaneously raising their own children. This is becoming increasingly common. For instance, a 2022 study by the Pew Research Center in the U.S.A. revealed that more than half of Americans in their 40s belong to the sandwich generation, which primarily includes Millennials and Generation X. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the Fifth Malaysia Population and Family Survey conducted by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) in 2022 found that 70% of elderly Malaysians live with their children or extended family. Surviving life as part of the sandwich generation comes with significant challenges but also meaningful blessings.

Caring for multiple generations in one household is costly. Small children and the elderly are particularly prone to illnesses due to their weaker immune systems, which contribute to high medical bills. According to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) in October 2020, the

death rate from pneumonia and influenza among the elderly aged 65 and above was 93.2 deaths per 100,000 population. Additionally, Dr Vinod Balasubramaniam, a molecular virologist from Monash University Malaysia stated in *The New Straits Times* in May 2022, that children, who aged five and younger are very susceptible to illnesses due to an immature immune system. Another study published in *The New Straits Times* in 2022 revealed that 8 out of 10 aging parents rely financially on their children. Moreover, 48% of offspring pay their parents' bills, and up to 67% provide essential groceries. This financial responsibility places significant emotional, mental, and physical strain on the sandwich generation.

"Time is gold" is perhaps the truest concept that the sandwich generation needs to embrace in their daily practice. Balancing numerous daily responsibilities - ferrying children to school early in the morning, working a 9-to-5 job, and meeting the needs of aging parents - can place an immense burden on their shoulders. There are times when the situation becomes overwhelming, such as when a child or parent is hospitalised while the workload from a demanding superior piles up. These circumstances can take a severe toll on the sandwich generation's mental and physical health. Furthermore, recent advancements in technology have exacerbated the problem by increasing employees' workloads. According to a global study conducted in 2024 in collaboration with The Upwork Research Institute, 77% of workers reported that technologies such as AI added extra tasks and decreased workplace efficiency. The constant need to cater to everyone's needs around the clock often affects the overall well being of the sandwich generation.





Coping and tolerating the attitudes of parents is also a challenge that the sandwich generation must comprehend on a daily basis. Parents, mostly from the baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964), are famously known for their authoritarian parenting style. The common characteristics of this parenting style include public shaming, an inability to accept 'no' for an answer, impatience in completing tasks, being highly demanding and ruthless toward their children. Dr Bernard Golden, a psychologist and founder of Anger Management Education in Chicago, has demonstrated the drawbacks of authoritarian parenting, linking it to depression, anxiety, and behavioral conflicts. Due to this, the sandwich generation seems to endure a similar lifestyle for most of their lives, as they spend more than half of their lifetime living with their parents.

Nonetheless, living together under one roof is undeniably a blessing. Firstly, Malaysians believe that honouring the elderly ensures blessings for the family. This belief stems from religion and culture, both integral aspects of life for almost all Malaysians. Elders' wisdom and blessings provide encouragement during challenging times, fostering confidence, stability, resilience, and perseverance - traits that cannot be acquired overnight and which can be seen as benefits of authoritarian parenting. Dr David Hibbard, a psychologist from California State University, stated in his research that authoritarian parenting instills discipline and high expectations, the qualities that help children achieve their life goals. The result of authoritarian parenting is the development of individuals with strong characters.

Secondly, living in one household fosters togetherness in daily activities. Problems such as loneliness and a lack of emotional support are less likely to occur due to the presence of multiple family members. These issues are related to mental health challenges which affect 970 million people globally, the data stated in World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2025. The caregiver, or the sandwich generation, should delegate household chores so that everyone can contribute to the family's daily needs. Cooperation among family members sets profound examples for children. Numerous studies on cooperative behavior have shown that children begin learning to cooperate at a very early age, approximately around their first birthday. Dr Brecland, a senior scientist, stated in 2022 that young children develop cooperative behavior through early exposure to their caregivers, including their parents and family members.

The life of the sandwich generation is undoubtedly exhausting. As Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's youngest cabinet minister, once said in 2022, the sandwich generation faces immense pressure, making it a tough generation. One must persevere and embrace the responsibilities of being the primary caregiver for the family. They can be described as the ultimate generation, quintessential and unmatched in their endurance. It is hoped that the community recognises the role of the sandwich generation and acknowledges their lifelong efforts to face the adversities daily.



THE
STARTING
POINT
OF ALL
ACHIEVEMENT
IS

DESIRE.

- Napoleon Hill